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POSITIVISM IN THE
UNITED STATES
(1853-1861)

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PREFACE

IN AUGUST, 1936, I published a book entitled *Auguste Comte and the United States (1816-1853)*,¹ in the preface of which I said that Dr. Frank Edward Manuel, then lecturer on history in Harvard University, would carry the study of the reception and the early influence of positivism in the United States down to the beginning of the Civil War. Now, eighteen months later, I regret to announce that Dr. Manuel, absorbed by his labors in other fields, finds it necessary to forego the composition of the work for which he is so eminently fitted. In the present volume I have undertaken to replace him, and to complete the consideration of a question which is, in my opinion, most vital in the history of American thought.

In this work, as in the one which preceded it, I have not attempted to give either a full biography of Auguste Comte or a detailed analysis of positivism; nor have I argued at length my own opinion of the philosopher or his theories. Comte's attitude towards the United States and the reaction to his teachings in that country, together with the requisite explanatory material, are my only subjects.

I have selected 1861 as the closing date of my investigations for several reasons. In the first place, Comte's death in 1857 put a damper on the activities of both his American critics and his American disciples. Then, the financial panic of 1857, one of the worst in history, took people's minds off philosophic questions and compelled them to devote all their energies to the more practical problems of saving their fortunes from ruin or earning their daily bread. And finally, in April, 1861, began the greatest disaster the United States has ever known, the Civil War between the North and the South. These unfortunate events so checked interest in intellectual matters

¹ Harvard University Press.

phie française en Amérique" in the *Revue philosophique* (May-June, 1919), the *Revue Occidentale*, and especially in the cards devoted to Auguste Comte and to positivism in the catalogues of the New York Public Library, the Boston Public Library, the Harvard College Library, and the Library of Congress.

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the assistance I have received while collecting my materials and preparing my manuscript. In Paris, MM. Fernand Rousseau, Joseph Saulnier, and Brias, of the Société Positiviste, and above all M. Paul Edger, the son of Henry Edger, have by their many services placed me under the deepest obligations. In the United States, Professor Andrew R. Morehouse, of Yale University, helped me to obtain photostats of the pencil sketch of the village of Modern Times which is now among the A. J. Macdonald Papers in the Yale Library. Dr. Frank Edward Manuel turned over to me a considerable number of notes, and has always held himself ready to aid me with suggestions. I am also particularly indebted to two books, John K. Ingram's *Practical Morals: A Treatise on Universal Education* (London, 1904) and John Edwin McGee's *A Crusade for Humanity—The History of Organized Positivism in England* (London, 1931), from which I reproduce, often with only slight changes, numerous passages explaining Comte's polity and Religion of Humanity. My thanks are due, finally, to the following institutions for allowing me to consult their collections and to publish some of the illustrations and documents contained in this work: the Société Positiviste, the Yale University Library, the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the Boston Public Library, and the Harvard College Library.

R. L. H.

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**POSITIVISM
IN THE UNITED STATES**

THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS AUGUSTE COMTE'S PHILOSOPHY, POLITY, AND RELIGION (1853-1861)

1. BRITISH WRITERS WHO HELPED TO ACQUAINT AMERICANS WITH COMTE AND POSITIVISM¹

BEFORE the publication, in November, 1853, of Harriet Martineau's free translation and condensation of Auguste Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive*, Americans who were unable to read the French language were usually obliged to depend on the writings of Britons for information concerning positivism; and even after the appearance of Miss Martineau's work, certain British writers continued to exert an influence in the United States.² The propagation of Comte's ideas by British critics was facilitated by the fact that works published in London or Edinburgh were generally reviewed in America within a year, and sometimes had the honor of an American edition within the same space of time. For a complete understanding of the dissemination of Comte's theories in the United States before the Civil War, a consideration of the Britons who served as intermediaries is imperative.

It should be borne in mind that the task of getting positivism discussed, to say nothing of accepted, was not an easy one in the middle of the nineteenth century. Religious sectarianism, often in narrow, fanatical forms, held sway, for America was then almost out of the current of thought of the Encyclopedists

¹ I include only those writers who are mentioned by Americans as having been useful to them.

² Only two French works dealing with the positive philosophy, besides those of Comte himself, seem to have won serious attention in the United States before 1861 — namely, Émile Littré's favorable *De la philosophie positive* (1845) and a hostile article by Émile Saisset in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, July 15, 1846, pp. 185-220.

tout parti, de toute secte, qui me passent chaque jour entre les mains, je n'en ai rencontré qu'un jusqu'ici dont la tendance fût hostile au christianisme. Ainsi cette philosophie-là est, je crois, entièrement étrangère aux États-Unis.¹

England, on the contrary, in spite of the narrowness of Victorian society, heard violent atheistic rumblings among the Chartists, and showed her good judgment by allowing a certain degree of freedom in religious and philosophic controversies. Hence, at a time when, because of a despicable conspiracy of silence, Auguste Comte was almost unknown in France, three Britons, Sir David Brewster, John Stuart Mill, and George Henry Lewes, manifested a deep concern in his philosophy, and strove valiantly to present it to their countrymen.

SIR DAVID BREWSTER, JOHN STUART MILL, AND
GEORGE HENRY LEWES

In July, 1838, Sir David Brewster published in the *Edinburgh Review* (pp. 271-308) a most favorable criticism of the first two volumes of the *Cours de philosophie positive*. After stressing Comte's "admirable observations on the doctrine and application of mathematical analysis" and "his fine reasoning and beautiful generalizations," Sir David remarks:

We follow him with delight through one of the finest surveys of astronomical truth that has ever been composed. . . . We could have wished to place before our readers some specimens of our author's manner of treating these difficult and deeply interesting topics [the law of gravitation; sidereal astronomy and positive cosmogony; celestial statics and dynamics], of his simple, yet powerful eloquence, of his enthusiastic admiration of intellectual superiority, of his accuracy as a historian, his honesty as a judge, and of his absolute freedom from all personal and national feelings. On every subject . . . the reader feels that he is conducted through the labyrinths of astronomical discovery by a safe and skillful guide, who has himself traced its windings and marked its ambiguities; and the philosopher who has grown hoary in the service of science longs

¹ *Promenade en Amérique* (Paris, 1855). I, 363.

Mill's praise of Comte is, indeed, lavish. The *Cours de philosophie positive* is, he says, "a work which only requires to be better known to place its author in the very highest class of European thinkers," and "a work which I hold to be far the greatest yet produced on the philosophy of the sciences." Comte, Mill thinks, is characterized by sagacity and discrimination, his speculations are ingenious, and his remarks profound. And elsewhere Mill adds:

The student will have much to learn . . . from M. Comte, of whose admirable work one of the most admirable portions is that in which he may truly be said to have created the philosophy of the higher mathematics. . . . M. Comte, whose view of the philosophy of classification, in the third volume of his great work, is the most complete with which I am acquainted. . . . M. Comte alone has seen the necessity of thus connecting all our generalizations from history with the laws of human nature; and he alone, therefore, has arrived at any results truly scientific. . . . His works are the only source to which the reader can resort for practical exemplification of the study of social phenomena on the true principles of the historical method. Of that method I do not hesitate to pronounce them a model.

Finally, in an outburst of enthusiasm, Mill concludes:

If the endeavors now making in all the more cultivated nations . . . for the construction of a philosophy of history shall be directed and controlled by those views of the nature of sociological evidence which I have attempted to state, but which hitherto are to my knowledge exemplified nowhere but in the writings of M. Comte, they cannot fail to give birth to a sociological system widely removed from the vague and conjectural character of all former attempts, and worthy to take its place, at last, among established sciences. When this time shall come, no important branch of human affairs will be any longer abandoned to empiricism and unscientific surmise: the circle of human knowledge will be complete, and it can only thereafter receive further enlargement by perpetual expansion from within.¹

¹ *A System of Logic*, book III, chap. 1, sec. 1; III, v, 9; VI, x, 5; III, xi, 1; III, xxiv, 6; IV, vii, 2; VI, x, 3; VI, x, 8.
 Wilfred H. Schoff, in "A Neglected Chapter in the Life of Comte" (Publications of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, No. 186, p. 74).

notice it won in the United States, was Lewes's *A Biographical History of Philosophy* (London; vols. I and II, 1845; vols. III and IV, 1846). In his Introduction (p. 21), the author aroused the wrath of philosophers everywhere by declaring:

Consciously or unconsciously the majority of thinking men condemn philosophy. They discredit or disregard it. The proof of this is in the general neglect into which philosophy has fallen, and the greater assiduity bestowed on positive science. Loud complaints of this neglect are heard. Great contempt is expressed by the philosophers. They may rail and they may sneer, but the world will go its way. The empire of positive science is established.

And in a note he added:

Let those who doubt this seek satisfaction in Auguste Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive*. Let every one who takes an interest in philosophy master this *opus magnum* of our age.

Fuel was added to the fire when Lewes observed (I, 22):

The leading feature of this work [*A Biographical History of Philosophy*] is one which distinguishes it from all others on the subject: the peculiarity of being a history of philosophy by one who firmly believes that philosophy is an impossible attempt, that it never has had any certitude, never can have any. All other historians have believed in philosophy.¹

From April to August, inclusive, 1852, Lewes published in the London *Leader* a series of articles on the positive philosophy, which appeared in London the following year in book form with the title *Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences: Being an Exposition of the Principles of the "Cours de philosophie positive" of Auguste Comte*. In the preface to this volume, Lewes asserted that he was attempting "to popularize the leading ideas of the greatest thinker of modern times." In his preface also, in an effort to disprove Sir William Hamilton's mocking statement that Comte was beginning to be taken up in England just

¹ As we shall see later, Lewes's history of philosophy failed to please American theologians and metaphysicians mainly because its pages are saturated with the ideas of Auguste Comte.

positive, en le représentant comme une déviation mystique et tyrannique."¹ He also blamed his former eulogists for the scantiness of the subsidy which had been founded in 1848 by Émile Littré for his support,² and censured them for exploiting the "occidental anarchy": "Mill et Lewes ne veulent pas que le positivisme s'élève de la philosophie à la religion, parce que sa tendance à régler la vie humaine menace un *statu quo* qu'ils exploitent et qu'ils désirent prolonger, au moins jusqu'à leur mort."³

JOHN DANIEL MORELL AND ROBERT BLAKEY

After Brewster, Mill, and Lewes had presented Comte to the British public, it was only natural that the historians of philosophy John Daniel Morell and Robert Blakey should allot some space to him in their compilations.

In 1846 Morell published in London his *An Historical and Critical View of the Speculative Philosophy of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, which contains (I, 480-486) a short article on "M. Comte," whose brilliant scientific genius has raised him to the very highest rank of modern authors, and given him a reputation not confined to France, but as extensive as the cultivation of philosophy itself." Although Morell regarded Comte as an "offspring of the school of Saint-Simon," he felt that his profound researches in science and his independence of mind as a thinker kept him from being a mere partisan of any system of philosophy whatever. After explaining a few of the fundamental ideas of Comte's "enormous system of materialism," Morell closed his brief account with regrets for Comte's illusions and atheism.

Robert Blakey, professor of logic and metaphysics in Queen's College, Belfast, in his *History of the Philosophy of*

¹ To Dr. Audiffrent, August 23, 1855; *ibid.*, I³, 279.

² The subsidy yielded the following amounts: 1849: 3000 francs; 1850: 3300; 1851: 4200; 1852: 5600; 1853: 7400; 1854: 7004; 1855: 7056.

³ To Dr. Audiffrent, December 25, 1855; *ibid.*, I⁴, 308.

⁴ Some British and American writers found it difficult to spell Comte's name correctly. The commonest misspellings are "Compe" and "Comté."

Three years after the appearance of McCosh's *Divine Government*, the Reverend Thomas Pearson, of Eyemouth, Scotland, assailed Comte in his *Infidelity; Its Aspects, Causes, and Agencies* (London, 1853; New York, 1855). The *Cours de philosophie positive* Pearson calls "the most celebrated of the recent productions of atheism" (p. 11). In a chapter entitled "Naturalism (or Rationalism) — The Denial of the Divine Providential Government," he takes Comte to task for seeking to discredit the doctrine of a divine Providence by maintaining a studied silence respecting it, when he might most naturally have introduced it. After rebuking Lewes for identifying himself in *A Biographical History of Philosophy* with some of the most objectionable principles of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, and for doubting "the finger of God in the stability and progress of the Roman people," the Reverend Mr. Pearson says concerning Comte's Religion of Humanity (p. 97):

M. Comte is not inactive in carrying out his principles. He knows that man will worship. But he is determined . . . to lead France and the other European nations from the worship of the supernatural to an idolatry of science or a systematic worship of humanity. With a view of utterly exploding the theological element, he has recently constructed a Positive Calendar of infidel worship, on the model of the festivals and saints' days of the Romish Church. It is nothing more than a public periodic commemoration of great men; and while Moses and Paul have a place in it with such heroes as Confucius and Mahomet and Voltaire, the divine man, the model man, Jesus Christ, is ignored. These be thy gods, O France, and this worship of positive philosophy is first to regenerate thee and then the world!

Peter Bayne, who studied theology at Edinburgh University and philosophy under Sir William Hamilton, devotes a chapter (pp. 483-502) of his *The Christian Life, Social and Individual* (Edinburgh, 1855; Boston, 1857, 1859) to "the far-famed positive philosophy." Although Bayne has no fear of the ultimate success of Comte's system, he closes his chapter with this warning against the menace of positive atheism:

out being associated with the more doubtful merits of his fundamental law of man's development.¹

RICHARD CONGREVE

Thus far practically all the British writers I have mentioned were adversaries of Comte and his doctrines, or were at least what Comte called "abortive positivists" — that is, they accepted the positive philosophy but rejected the Religion of Humanity and the polity. We now come to a scholar, Richard Congreve, the founder of the English positivist movement, who for nearly fifty years by word and by deed showed that he was a "complete positivist," and who, with his countrymen Frederic Harrison, Edward Spencer Beesly, and J. H. Bridges, formed the most brilliant group of disciples that Comte ever had in any country.

Congreve was born at Leamington, Warwickshire, in 1818. Educated at Rugby and Oxford, he subsequently taught at Rugby, and obtained a fellowship at Wadham College. He first met Comte in Paris in 1849, and in another visit five years later declared himself an adherent of the Religion of Humanity. The following year he resigned his fellowship at Oxford, and devoted the remainder of his life to the propagation of Comte's theories. In the late seventies he caused a schism in English positivism by refusing to recognize the authority of Pierre Laffitte, Comte's successor as director of the universal positivist movement. He died in 1899. The only work by him which attracted the attention of American readers was his English translation (London, 1858) of Comte's *Caté-*

¹ Buchanan, *Faith in God and Modern Atheism Compared* (London, 1857), I, 496. The first half of this work was published in Boston in 1857 with the title *Modern Atheism*.

The fundamental law of man's development, mentioned above by Buchanan, is the law of the three states, which may be expressed briefly as follows: The human mind invariably adopts three successive modes of explaining phenomena: first, the theological; then, the metaphysical; and finally, the positive. In the theological stage, phenomena are referred to supernatural agents; in the metaphysical, to abstract entities; and in the positive, to mere natural laws.

LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

quoted," we find the title of Comte's fundamental treatise. Even Alfred Henry Huth, who seemed to think that he was sent into this world only to defend Buckle against aspersions, says merely that "the recklessness of the assertion that Buckle owed everything to Comte is obvious to whoever will consider what each has achieved in the science of history."¹

Buckle completes the list of British writers who played a part in shaping American opinion concerning Comte and positivism.² Of the thirteen men whom I have considered, the majority, while admiring Comte's extraordinary intellectual powers, were opposed to certain of his doctrines. Brewster, who based his review on only one-third of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, was manifestly too flattering in his appreciation. Mill and Lewes, the principal agents in introducing positivism into Great Britain, were in the main staunch upholders of the positive philosophy, but bitter opponents of the Religion of Humanity. The mildly condemnatory articles in the histories of Morell and Blakey are of little weight, since it is clear that their authors had studied carefully neither the man nor the system they were judging. The Protestant theologians McCosh, Pearson, Thompson, Tulloch, Bayne, and Buchanan, blinded by what they regarded as Comte's atheism, were of course unable to give anything but hostile verdicts. Buckle surely came under the influence of Comte, and as his *History of Civilization* was widely read in the United States, he helped somewhat to propagate the positive philosophy in that country. Of the Britons treated above, the only complete positivist was Richard Congreve, who, as I have said already, spent a half-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194. On pp. 191-199 Huth draws a comparison of Comte and Buckle, which is wholly to the disadvantage of the Frenchman.

² The behavior of the English scholar and philosopher William Whewell towards Comte was so contemptible that I prefer not to mention him here. I shall allow one of his American contemporaries to censure him later. That Whewell and Comte exchanged some of their works is revealed by a letter from Comte to Mill (*Lettres d'A. Comte à J. S. Mill*, p. 259; letter dated August 15, 1844).

in philosophy, due to the influence of Lant Carpenter, a Unitarian minister of Bristol, led her to study Hartley and Priestley, with the result that her religious beliefs underwent a pronounced modification. Her first article, "Female Writers on Practical Divinity," appeared in 1821, and some eight years later she began to write for a living. From then on, almost to the time of her death in 1876, she poured forth a constant stream of poems, short tales, children's stories, novels, and essays on biography, history, politics, political economy, travel, and mesmerism, most of which, though forgotten now, were of considerable value in their day. By 1832 she was one of the best-known *littérateurs* of England, and a close friend of Hallam, Sydney Smith, Malthus, Milman, Rogers, Monckton Milnes, and Bulwer. In 1834-1836 she visited the United States and, subsequently, Italy, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. Before 1845 she had passed from Unitarianism to agnosticism and had repudiated all theology. About the middle of the century appeared her *Letters on the Laws of Man's Social Nature and Development*, the greater part of which was written by her atheistic friend Henry G. Atkinson. The anti-theological views set forth in this work shocked the clergymen of the English-speaking world. In the early fifties, after reading the writings of Littré and Lewes on positivism, she became interested in the *Cours de philosophie positive* and decided, as soon as time would permit, to turn it into English. Hardly had she formed this project when, most unexpectedly, she received a communication from a Norfolk County gentleman named Lombe who, learning of her plan from John Chapman the publisher, sent her five hundred pounds to pay her for her labor and to defray the expense of publication. She entered upon her vast undertaking in the spring of 1851, and finished it in October, 1853.¹

¹ For Harriet Martineau's account of her translation of the *Cours*, see her *Autobiography* (Boston, 1877), under the years 1851, 1852, and 1853. The following are the editions of her translation, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, which I have seen or seen noticed: 1853, 1875, 1893; John

alienated from the faith of their fathers, are in a dangerous state of fluctuation.

Miss Martineau further explains in her preface that in an effort to bring her work up to date she engaged the astronomer John Pringle Nichol, of the University of Glasgow, to revise the sections devoted to mathematics, astronomy, and physics. However, in mathematics and astronomy, Nichol deemed it unnecessary to make any material changes, except the omission of Comte's speculation on the possible mathematical verification of Laplace's cosmogony. On the other hand, he made large excisions in the parts dealing with physics, since physics had advanced with great strides since Comte treated it in 1835.

The most convincing proof that Harriet Martineau's translation was adequate in every respect is that Comte, an extremely captious critic when his works or theories were in question, set his seal of approval on it. In a letter to the mathematician Papot, he wrote (January 9, 1854):

Comme vous savez, je crois, l'anglais, vous pourrez faire venir de Londres (chez John Chapman, 142 Strand) l'important travail en deux volumes que vient de publier Miss Martineau. . . . Nous devons regarder cette incomparable opération comme un événement décisif pour la digne propagande du positivisme, non seulement en Angleterre, mais dans tout l'Occident, où ce livre sera probablement traduit, même en France peut-être.¹ D'après une appréciation sommaire mais suffisante, je n'ai point hésité d'écrire à cette éminente coopératrice que son nom accompagnerait le mien dans la postérité. . . . Mon traité fondamental devra désormais être étudié de préférence dans cette traduction sans exemple, du moins pour la plupart des lecteurs, en réservant la lecture originale aux théoriciens proprement dits.² Outre cet immense service, une telle publication com-

¹It was translated into French by C. Avezac-Lavigne (Bordeaux, 1871, 1872).

²Comte put the translation in his "*Bibliothèque positiviste du prolétaire au dix-neuvième siècle*" in place of the original. Later, as his religion became uppermost in his mind, the *Système de politique positive* was the cornerstone of his propaganda to such a degree that he advised against a French translation of Miss Martineau's condensation (*Correspondance inédite d'Auguste Comte* [Paris, 1903, 1904], III, 143; letter to M. de Tholouze, dated January 4, 1856).

philosophy); and secondly, that scientists conceal their obligations to him through fear of shocking prejudices. Although Miss Martineau praises science in her preface, Hill continues, she has had no scientific training; and her statement that theologians and metaphysicians are not competent to judge the *Cours de philosophie positive* is pure nonsense. Hill concedes that her translation is well done, that she retains the essential ideas of the original, and that her style is better than Comte's.¹

Two months later Professor Francis Bowen, of Harvard College, devoted one-fifth of a thirty-page article on the positive philosophy to an excoriation of Harriet Martineau.² Her former writings, Bowen admits, showed considerable ability, but it was the ability of an ill-regulated mind working out of its proper sphere, and scorning all those limitations and restraints which indirectly help in the search after truth. In her ambition to leave the common track, Bowen adds, she has wandered wildly over the whole field of knowledge and come to the most barren conclusion at last — to a belief, if it can be called such, that there is no divine superintendence of the affairs of this world and no hope of a world to come. The leading vice of her character, Bowen asserts, has always been intellectual arrogance. Ever devoid of deference for man, she now ceases to have faith in her Creator; in fact, the only being she has never learned to distrust is herself. Led astray at the outset of her career by Lord Brougham, she tried to teach the people of Great Britain the principles of political economy in popular tales, which her readers ate for the sugar (that is, for the stories) and then threw the medicine away. She was even guilty of upholding the revolting theories of Malthus concerning population. In her attempts to instruct, she has always combined impertinence and pedantry. Her publications are characterized by a disposition to meddle with subjects

¹ For remarks on positivism made by Hill in 1846, see my *Auguste Comte and the United States (1816-1853)*, pp. 17, 18.

² *North American Review*, July, 1854, pp. 200-229.

shock many persons who are incapable of estimating their scientific merits; but she has no milder terms with which to characterize the feelings of those persons than "hate," "intolerance," "theological selfishness," and "metaphysical pride." However, on one point, Bowen observes, she is right: one must indeed trample both theology and metaphysics under foot before one can appreciate the claims of the positive philosophy. John Stuart Mill preceded her in presenting positivism to the British, but he respected the opinions or the prejudices which he felt constrained to combat.

M. Comte and his present translator [Bowen concludes] are far from sharing either Mill's scruples or his delicacy. It must have been from harmony of temperament and moral character, as well as from coincidence of opinion, that Miss Martineau felt attracted towards the author of the *Positive Philosophy*, and impelled to become the expositor of his doctrines to the English public. For dogmatism and conceit, M. Comte is unrivaled by any philosophical writer we have ever read, with perhaps the single exception of Hobbes.

It would seem that Professor Bowen had uttered all the harsh things about Harriet Martineau that a good Christian could invent. Be that as it may, aid came to him in the shape of a brief diatribe by the Reverend Lyman Hotchkiss Atwater, Congregationalist, of the College of New Jersey, at Princeton,¹ who characterized Miss Martineau as a lady already famous for her masculine writings and her strong skeptical tendencies. Her present stupendous attempt to rob creation of its God and man of his nobler nature and destiny seems monstrous in any one, but that a woman should thus animalize humanity, under the plea of ameliorating it, is positively revolting. This hostility to the gospel of truth and love which has redeemed woman from heathenish debasement is, to put it mildly, beyond comprehension. Perhaps it can be explained by the maxim of Hume, the forerunner of positivism, that "the best things when perverted become the worst." After quoting several lines from Harriet Martineau's preface, the Reverend Mr. Atwater

¹ *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, January, 1856, pp. 63, 64.

3. THE PRINCIPAL AMERICAN CRITICS OF THE POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY

PARKE GODWIN

Godwin, one of the earliest, and one of the keenest, American critics of the positive philosophy, was, strange to say, neither a theologian nor a metaphysician, but a journalist who took a deep interest in the social experiments of his day.¹

In the "Editorial Notes" of the newly founded *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* (December, 1853, p. 683), Godwin published a few lines on Auguste Comte, "the greatest of modern thinkers." The author of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, Godwin asserts, is an exponent of that view of natural philosophy which may be called phenomenalism, because, rejecting entirely the doctrine of causes, or occult essences, in nature, it confines its attention exclusively to the study of mere relations of coexistence and succession. Godwin then adds an acute remark, which is one of the few defenses of Comte against the accusation of atheism. Positivism, he observes, is charged by its opponents with being immoral and atheistic in its character, but the charge is, in his opinion, not altogether just; for, though there are many heedless expressions in Comte which expose him to such a construction of his theory, the theory itself does not involve that conclusion. It ignores, it is true, God and religion, as they are commonly conceived, but it does not necessarily deny them; and there is a view in which it may be regarded not only as not inconsistent with theology, but in conformity with a profound spiritual philosophy.

Do we, after all, know anything of nature, Godwin asks, or of the so-called laws of nature, besides the simple phenomena,

¹ Godwin (1816-1904), after his graduation in 1834 from the College of New Jersey, at Princeton, studied law but did not practise. From 1837 he was for forty-five years connected off and on with the editorial management of the *New York Evening Post*. He was the author of a number of books, among which was *A Popular View of the Doctrines of Charles Fourier* (1844). In 1853 he became an associate editor of *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*.

bookshop of Wiley and Putnam, on Broadway, New York City, and took from the shelves several large and dingy volumes, printed in French, and bound in coarse rose-colored paper, — volumes which purported to be a treatise on the entire circle of the sciences. The first page that he scanned bore a statement of the imperfections of analytical geometry. "Ah," said Godwin to himself, "here is a conceited fellow who believes himself capable of reforming the mathematics." Interested by the apparent presumption of the "fellow," he read farther, and soon learned that the author of the uninviting volumes was not only an earnest partisan of mathematics, but a thinker of the most audacious stamp. Repulsed at first by the novelty and boldness of his remarks, Godwin was gradually held fast by a certain assurance of movement as he passed along the dizzy heights of the most adventurous speculation. "A stern and relentless intellect [he says], marching remorselessly along its path, was treading down our dearest hopes, and crushing out the noblest and sweetest sensibilities, and, in the midst of all our reluctance and horror, dragging us with it to its infernal goal." Finally, dismissing all fear of his guide, Godwin became convinced that an extraordinary man held him in his hands; and when, towards the close of the work, he chanced upon a wholly new science, — the science of society, — the fact jumped in too nicely with the tenor of his own previous researches and hopes to allow any dictates of economy to hinder him from becoming the owner of those shabby-looking volumes.

This unexpected discovery of a mortal who discussed with ease and familiarity many of the highest problems of science caused Godwin to want to learn from others something about him and his work. Alas, he searched in vain for any notice of him. The periodicals of France and of England had no word for him; the learned societies of the world were unconscious of his name; and in private circles few persons had ever heard of him. At last Godwin came across Sir David Brewster's article in the *Edinburgh Review* (1838), which merely showed

Philosophers too, Godwin continues, deserved their share of censure. Finding in Comte none of their customary hair-splitting and thimblerrigging about the pure reason, the categories, and the genesis of the idea of the absolute into which philosophy had degenerated, they had retired to their void inane.

However, Godwin says, in spite of prejudice and conspiracies of silence, Comte is at last famous: Harriet Martineau has taken him under her especial patronage, and so his ideas are rapidly gaining ground.

After this introductory matter, Godwin announces that he purposes to survey Comte and his claims, although he is certain that his remarks will please neither Comte's extravagant admirers nor his more bitter enemies.

He objects forthwith to the limits of knowledge prescribed by the positive philosophy. Comte is wrong, he thinks, in the inference that we cannot properly believe what we do not know. The intelligible does not exhaust real knowledge, and is not the equivalent or the measure of being. We *know* sensible facts and their relations, but we *believe* truths or propositions which transcend those facts. We know the finite, the conditioned, the relative, the multiple, the changeable; but we believe in the infinite, the unconditioned, the absolute, and the permanent, not as antagonistic to sensible facts, but as contained in them, not as natural or phenomenal, but as rational or spiritual. Through the endless ramifications of practical life we walk by faith, not by knowledge. How many persons, Godwin inquires, have ever demonstrated the theory of gravitation for themselves rather than believed it on the testimony of others? Comte errs, therefore, in disregarding God and the absolute, and in restricting thought or belief to phenomenal nature. To rest on the facts of science is to abandon reason to a barren nominalism, to close the eyes of the soul, and to shut out the Creator from his universe.

Comte's law of the three states Godwin admits as a general

that at a particular period one of them preponderates, whereas the others are held in abeyance.

Comte's law of the three states, Godwin concludes, is an inadequate statement of the principle of successive development. Theology, metaphysics, and positivism all help to carry on the problem to its final solution. Neither theology nor metaphysics is transitory; they have never been deserted and left behind in the course of human progress; they still flourish and will at last meet in that divine philosophy which has ever been their aim. Growing *pari passu* with man, they rocked the cradle of his infancy and will live to witness the glory of his crowning manliness in the new reign of God, through Christ.

Having now considered Comte's limitation of knowledge and the law of the three states, Godwin next takes up what he calls the third fundamental principle of the positive philosophy—that is, Comte's hierarchy, or classification, of the sciences. This classification, Godwin thinks, is Comte's most brilliant achievement, although it is vitiated in some respects by the preliminary errors to which reference has already been made. Nevertheless no one has ever devised a better scale of knowledge.¹

Godwin declares, however, that he can conceive a scale with logic, or formal method, as the basis of all sciences, and philosophy, including theology, as their result; but he owns that Comte's hierarchy cannot be improved within the sphere of strict science.

Although Comte's hatred of theology and metaphysics has blinded him to the most beautiful deductions contained in his own premises, his system, Godwin believes, has clearly demonstrated the science of society as the culminating glory of all the sciences. Still, Comte has failed to perceive the pre-eminent mark and distinction of humanity: he has not discovered the characteristics which make a man a man. His loftiest conception is of the natural or scientific man, but of the

¹ For Comte's classification of the sciences, see p. 10, n. 1, above.

Hill's notice is of little worth. Its charges against Comte are too vague and sweeping, and arguments in support of the charges are totally lacking.

FRANCIS BOWEN

Francis Bowen (1811-1890) was graduated from Harvard in 1833, and twenty years later became Alford professor of natural religion, moral philosophy, and civil polity in his *alma mater*. Generally recognized as the most popular member of the faculty of his university, he was as a philosopher especially interested in establishing concord between philosophy and Christianity. A declared adversary of Kant, Fichte, Cousin, and Comte, and a stanch partisan of Locke and Berkeley, he was a transitional thinker, a metaphysician with a pronounced theological bias.

In July, 1854, Bowen published in the *North American Review* (pp. 200-229) a criticism of Harriet Martineau's translation of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, a portion of which I have outlined above (pp. 23-25).

After assailing Miss Martineau for presuming to entertain opinions different from his, the Alford professor of moral philosophy in the foremost university of the United States further vents his spleen by waxing sarcastic concerning Comte's attack of insanity in 1826. The professor, in an effort to show that the philosopher was still insane in 1842, says:

To imagine that the whole scientific world is jealous of the success of a work which with difficulty found a publisher, and which, though the first volume appeared in 1830, has not yet, we believe, reached the honors of a second edition,¹ and to suppose further that all the theologians and metaphysicians are leagued with the savants in persecuting its author, is quite enough, we should think, to constitute a case of mental hallucination.

Having rid himself of this venom, the most popular professor in Harvard launches an attack on the *Cours de philoso-*

¹ A second edition of the *Cours* was published in Paris in 1852 by Borrani and Droz.



Auguste Comte and his three angels. From left to right: Clotilde de Vaux, Rosalie Boyer, and Sophie Blot. From a painting by Antoine Étex.

phie positive. In his opinion, Comte's errors are due to his high mathematical attainments. The mathematician, he avers, deals solely with a kind of reasoning which admits of no doubt or degrees, which is infallible, and which, therefore, is inapplicable to any of the ordinary concerns of life. Resting entirely on demonstrable evidence, and perceiving that his conclusions are absolutely certain, the mathematician regards with impatience and contempt the hesitation or the total disbelief which may cling to the minds of the vulgar. So he is inclined to overweening presumption or incurable arrogance. Carrying his own peculiar logic along with him whenever he quits the territory of the exact sciences, he makes the mistake of requiring the evidence of intuition or demonstration where only probable testimony can be had, and is thus often led to reject truths which are familiar to common sense and level to the comprehension of a child. Busied exclusively with the phenomena of mathematics and the idea of necessary connection, he banishes mind and free agency from creation, and constructs a mechanical and soulless universe. These unhappy results of mathematical studies are not inevitable, Bowen asserts, since minds of a higher order, such as Pascal, Newton, and Leibnitz, can rise above them. Auguste Comte, however, inferior creature that he is, cannot do so, as is shown in the principles, the reasoning, and the conclusions of the *Cours de philosophie positive*.

In constructing his hierarchy of the sciences, Bowen continues, Comte the mathematician naturally gives the first place to mathematics. His six sciences — mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology — are, according to him, the only possible branches of human knowledge. Metaphysics, or the science of the mind, is a delusion; politics and ethics, except so far as they are deductions from sociology, are mere blunders; and theology is only a dream.²

² In the second edition of his *The Principles of Metaphysical and Ethical Science Applied to the Evidences of Religion* (Boston, 1855), p. 157, note, Bowen quotes from "M. Comte, a mathematician who will not be accused of

many proselytes or to enjoy any other than a temporary notoriety. It has, in fact, been received with but little favor in France, and Miss Martineau's efforts will not obtain for it much currency in England. Even the controversy it has evoked cannot long retard its progress to oblivion.¹

Although Bowen has the prejudices peculiar to the majority of Comte's American critics, he brings into the consideration of the positive philosophy a new idea — that is, that all the French philosopher's errors are attributable to his mathematical mind.²

LYMAN HOTCHKISS ATWATER

The Reverend Mr. Atwater, theologian and metaphysician, was a self-appointed defender of orthodox Christianity against

¹It seems to be the irony of fate that of the American clergymen and professors who predicted that Comte and his philosophy would soon be forgotten, there remain only vague names bidden away in biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias, whereas the fame of Comte and his system grows constantly. Perhaps Émile Faguet judged Comte more correctly than Bowen when he wrote: "C'est le semeur d'idées et l'excitateur intellectuel le plus puissant qui ait été en notre siècle, le plus grand penseur, à mon avis, que la France ait eu depuis Descartes" (*Politiques et moralistes*, 2^e série, p. 369). And Ferdinand Brunetière: "Il y a plus de choses qu'on ne le croit dans la philosophie d'Auguste Comte; il y a surtout plus de lecture, plus d'érudition, plus de connaissances précises et concrètes, que n'y en ont su discerner ou signaler quelques-uns de ses critiques" (*Sur les chemins de la croyance* [9th ed., Paris, 1912], p. 68). Faguet and Brunetière might have mentioned some of the men influenced by Comte in France alone: for example, Ampère, Cournot, Proudhon, Fustel de Coulanges, Renan, Taine, Claude Bernard, Berthelot, Ribot, Charcot, Bertillon, Jules Ferry, Paul Bourget, Anatole France, Alfred Capus, Barrès, Alfred Lolsy, and Charles Maurras. Comte has influenced the novel, the drama, history, poetry, sociology, scientific psychology, evolutionism, agnosticism, monism, pragmatism, and intuitionism. He taught the nineteenth century to believe in the omnipotence of positive knowledge, of the scientific method, of experience, and of the laws of nature.

²Of course, many persons before Bowen had pointed out the errors of the mathematical mind: for instance, Edward Hitchcock, American educator and scientist, who wrote: "It is said . . . that mathematicians have been usually prone to skepticism concerning religious truth . . . The devotees of [mathematics] often become so attached to its demonstrations that they will not admit any evidence of a less certain character" (*The Religion of Geology and Its Connected Sciences* [Boston, 1851], p. 486).

Britain to engage the more recent advocates of theism and Christianity in their refutation (for example, James McCosh, John Tulloch, Robert Anchor Thompson, and Peter Bayne). All these Christian champions are combating positivism and pantheism as the chief adversaries of the religion and the existence of God.

Comte boasts, Atwater goes on, that he has founded sociology, which exhibits man in his social relations, and consequently in his moral aspects, "so far as the idea of morality can find a place in such a system."¹ And Comte thinks that historical science will grow fast and extinguish all theological and metaphysical systems.

The founder of sociology, Atwater adds, anticipates a vast and beneficent revolution from positivism: the science of the mind is to be reorganized and education regenerated. Each science will be viewed in its relations to all other sciences, a fact which will further the progress of the various sciences, since each contains many problems insoluble except as seen in the light of related sciences. This method, according to Comte, will afford the only solid basis of social regeneration. "Thus the besom of destruction, which begins by sweeping out of existence the divine, the supernatural and supersensual, — all religion and the very basis of morals, — purposes to end with the overthrow of all ordinances and institutions in which they are embodied."

Atwater next considers Comte's classification of the sciences. "It cannot be denied," he owns, "that this arrangement gives

¹ Cf. Anatole France: "Jamais homme n'aima l'humanité d'un cœur à la fois si viril et si tendre, jamais homme ne travailla au bonheur de ses semblables d'une telle ardeur, et ne déploya tant, ni de si hautes facultés, pour tracer le plan de la demeure idéale, de la maison de gloire et d'amour" (*ibid.*, p. 290). And Henry Edger, Comte's American disciple: "The positive morality, while aiming at a purer altruism than any theological morality, involves none of the asceticism of the latter, encourages no self-immolation. The maxim in which the supremacy of the higher sentiments is systematically summed up 'Live for others,' includes . . . the most sublime altruism" (*The Positive Community* [Modern Times, Long Island, 1864], p. 12).

Comte's scheme will spread, Atwater warns, because man's sinful heart is not willing to retain God in its knowledge. However, in the long run no system of atheism or infidelity is likely to be permanent: its folly and absurdity become manifest and arrest its progress. But such a scheme may do incalculable harm. In the eighteenth century, atheism and materialism, propagated first by a band of speculatists, gradually diffused themselves through the masses of the French people, and helped to precipitate and aggravate whatever was terrible in the French Revolution. The skepticism of that hideous period has its resurrection in the positive philosophy, which is little else than the following out of Hume's principles to their logical result.

Pantheism offers an attractive side to man's moral corruption and intellectual pride, not only by undermining accountability, but by its mysticism, profound inanities, and meaningless platitudes; and the positive philosophy, by its clearness and narrowness, its show of evidence and demonstration, its mock humility in giving up all pretense of knowing anything not evident to the senses, will not be without its attractions for the skeptical minds of the sensational school, for the uneducated and the unthinking, and for the socialist and the sensualist.

According to the teachings of pantheism and positivism alike, Atwater says, all the phases of opinion and practice, even the foulest abominations that have ever prevailed, have been good and true for their day and generation; just as good and true for their time as Christianity, which, like them, is evanescent in the end. There is no such thing as absolute and immutable truth. Such opinions, the Reverend Mr. Atwater concludes, sap the foundations of all responsibility, religion, and morality, and of all real earnestness in the investigation of truth.

Immediately after the article of which I have just given a summary, there appeared in the *Biblical Repertory and Prince-*

sity, Illinois,¹ published in the *Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Nashville, Tennessee) the first part of a fifty-page article entitled "Comte's Positive Philosophy," the third instalment of which so impressed the editor of that periodical that he voiced his approval in these words: "A powerful paper." Munsell's essay is, indeed, among the most noteworthy written by a Protestant clergyman of the United States: it is searching and comprehensive, and, although naturally marked by the usual Christian prejudices, contains a large amount of praise intermingled with violent censure. In addition, it treats points which the ordinary criticism neglects — such as the probable influence, present and prospective, of the positive philosophy, and the value of Comte's method as applied to the development of the natural sciences. The Reverend Mr. Munsell was a keen dialectician, and besides, his literary style is good except when he lapses into the florid, grandiloquent periods which were regarded as a necessary embellishment of the ministerial writings of the fifties. Only twice does he render himself ridiculous: first, when he undertakes to recast the law of the three states, and secondly, when he chides Comte for not having been born in a Bible-reading Protestant home, presumably in Illinois.

Munsell acknowledges that to review the *Cours de philosophie positive*, even in Harriet Martineau's condensation, is a difficult task. He purposes to criticize it for the common mind, for the ordinary reader of the *Quarterly Review*, not for the practised metaphysician.

The law of the three states, the keystone of Comte's philosophy, Munsell likens to a tree, the fabled *bohun upas*. But beware:

If tempted by its spreading branches, its gorgeous flowers, and its golden fruits, we seek to repose beneath its shade, inhale the fragrance of its blossoms, and feast upon its fruits, it will but be to intoxicate

¹ Munsell later became president of this institution. He was the author of a well-known textbook on psychology (1871).

universal empire. It ignores every higher, holier, nobler aspiration that fills the human soul. Humanity has recoiled from it, in spite of the beauty of its scientific forms, the massive grandeur of its proportions, and the earnestness of its spirit. It is doubtful whether a single person can be found who accepts it without reservation,¹ and certainly it can never create a permanent, distinctive school of philosophy which shall fully endorse and practically develop its essential principles. But as an attempt to classify the physical sciences, it has no rival, either for simplicity, comprehensiveness, or logical completeness. It ascertains the true filiation of the sciences, determines their hierarchical rank, points out the method by which they may be most successfully pursued, and directs the scientist in the path which will lead to real acquisitions rather than to endless discussions and hypotheses. In short, positivism is of incalculable value for science, but alas, it is clouded by a sordid materialism which dooms it to failure.

In the meantime, its atheistic spirit is penetrating everywhere. Its covert assumptions that mind is but organized matter; that external phenomena alone are real; that the ideas of God, of creation, of a future life, and of moral accountability lie beyond the pale of certitude; and that we are concerned only with the phenomenal—such assumptions are well calculated to lead the unreflecting astray and to have a great influence on the age. Arise, valiant Christians! Down with positivism and its poisonous spirit! Grind your axes and fell the dread bohun upas!

Under its baleful shadow, faith in God, in virtue, and in a future life must perish. . . . Let us as Christians . . . carry the battle home to the citadel of error, and fight as truth should ever fight, on the offensive. Let the contradictions of positivism be unmasked. Let it be stripped of its borrowed robes and exhibited in all its naked deformity. Let it be shown . . . that all that is true and valuable in M. Comte's philosophy may be retained, and yet its impious spirit be discarded.

¹ I shall show later that Mansell was wrong on this point.

interest. In order to please Comte's followers, he purposes to descend from the aerial regions of theology and metaphysics into the narrow arena of positivism itself, and take the weapons which that philosophy would force into his hands. He thinks that if Comte's system can be made to judge itself, it will pronounce its own doom.

Shields devotes most of his paper to a refutation of the law of the three states, for which, he affirms, the historical argument has no value. Indeed, if the evidence of human history shows anything in regard to the question, it shows that the three tendencies, instead of opposing and destroying one another, have actually proceeded together in their development, over every field of research they have entered, and are now to be found harmoniously coexisting in the most advanced nations and the most accomplished minds. And even if Comte's law were true for the past, what is to guarantee that it would hold for the future? Theology and metaphysics, universally extinct according to Comte,¹ may revive.

And the theoretical, or *a priori*, argument is a still more signal failure. The position which must be maintained in such an argument is that the three tendencies are antagonistic and irreconcilable, with an antagonism, in Comte's opinion, of a threefold nature—namely, intellectual, moral, and social. This antagonism, Comte insists, is destined to issue in the annihilation of theology and the entire supremacy of positivism, through the intervention of metaphysics. Shields will prove that the threefold antagonism of theology and positive science is merely a figment of Comte's imagination.

In the case of intellectual antagonism, Shields resorts to the ancient argument that natural laws must be regarded as the most conspicuous evidence possible of the reality and presence of a divine will; and that every advance of positive science, far from being an invasion of theology, is simply a fresh demonstration of its validity, and additional proof that the intelli-

¹ Shields is misstating Comte's view. See p. 32, n. 2, above.

ancient institutions become unsettled, and society is at the alternative of continuing in anarchy or assuming a new organization through a political revolution. According to Comte, the most civilized societies are now passing through this anarchical condition, as a result of a decline of theological, and a rise of positive, opinions, effected by the critical spirit of modern metaphysics; but it is his expectation that positivism will ultimately so predominate over monotheism as to place Christianity on a par with Mohammedanism, and at length consign the Church to antiquity, as a mere worn chrysalis, out of which civilization will have struggled forth into new life and glory. Such views are, in Shields's opinion, absurd. The idea of substituting positivism for theology in the social organism is even more chimerical than the substitution of the scientific view for the devotional in the moral constitution. The picture which Comte elaborates, of a new social organization resulting from the positive philosophy, religion, and polity, and composed of a race of virtual atheists absorbed in the worship of their own humanity as deity, cannot exist even in imagination without instantly dissolving into anarchy¹ or relapsing to barbarism.

The foregoing argument in respect to the relations of theology and positive science, Shields says, has virtually secured the argument in respect to the relations of both tendencies to metaphysics. It is only on the supposition that the two extremes of the series are antagonistic that the intermediate term could acquire any hostile bearing. Inasmuch as that supposition has been disproved by his arguments, Shields contends, we must consider the abstractions of metaphysics as comparatively harmless and inoperative. As regards the relation of metaphysics to positive science, he adds, it would be easy to show that the progress of the latter actually depends on the progress of the former.

In view of what he has said above, Shields concludes that

¹ Cf. Paul Cottin. " . . . la conséquence sociale du positivisme est l'anarchie" (*Positivisme et anarchie* [Paris, 1908], p. 51).

characteristic peril of modern civilization," for the purpose of showing that the opposition between theology and science has reached a critical stage, and that philosophic and educational reforms are already imminent and necessary.¹ And in 1877 Shields published in New York City his *The Final Philosophy, or System of Perfectible Knowledge Issuing from the Harmony of Science and Religion*. Should any one doubt the far-reaching influence of Comte's theories, even on the most orthodox theologians and metaphysicians, he has only to examine in these two works Shields's classification of the sciences, the germ of which is to be found in the *Cours de philosophie positive*.²

FRANCIS WHARTON

In 1859 Francis Wharton, professor of logic and rhetoric in Kenyon College, Ohio,³ published in Philadelphia a volume entitled *A Treatise on Theism, and on the Modern Skeptical Theories*, the object of which was "to present the theistic argument and the replies to the modern skeptical theories in such a shape as the best to impress the American mind of the present day." Naturally, Auguste Comte occupies a considerable amount of space in Wharton's book.⁴

¹ Although Shields mentions but few names in *Philosophia Ultima*, there is no doubt that he has Comte in mind when he speaks (p. 19) of a neutral philosopher who does not invade but ignores the province of revelation. On p. 66 of the same work Comte is named as an inductive philosopher.

² For an excellent article on Shields, see Henry William Rankin, "Charles Woodruff Shields and the Unity of Science," in the *Princeton Theological Review*, January, 1915, pp. 49-91.

³ Wharton (1810-1889) was born in Philadelphia. He was graduated from Yale in 1839 and admitted to the bar four years later. In 1862 he took orders in the Episcopal Church, and in 1871 became a professor in the Episcopal Divinity School at Cambridge, Massachusetts. He also held the chair of international law in the Boston Law School. He was the author of numerous works on legal subjects.

⁴ Of especial interest is Wharton's positivist bibliography and his comments on some of the authors and works contained therein. He thought, for example, that Sir David Stewart *betrayed Comte too much*; that James McCosh, although he admired Comte's penetrating intellect and clear style, exposed the baselessness of his social and theological assumptions; that John Stuart Mill, in *A System of Logic*, brought to the indirect, though potent, defense of

were not sufficient, Wharton declares that, before his *liaison* with Clotilde, Comte formed a marriage of convenience, the object of which was to rescue him from immediate want, but that later, when circumstances made him independent, he not very generously got rid of his wife.¹

justice, Clotilde returned to her parents in Paris. The laws of France prevented her from securing a divorce, and so she tried courageously, but in vain, to earn a living with her pen. In April, 1844, she became acquainted with Auguste Comte, who was not only a cerebral prodigy, but also an extremely sensual man. Comte fell in love with Clotilde immediately, and his love changed his manner of living and caused a complete revolution in his mode of thought. A remarkable correspondence between them began on April 30, 1845, and ended on March 8, 1846, a month before Clotilde's death from pulmonary tuberculosis. This correspondence shows that, thanks to her determined resistance, the relations between the philosopher and his "incomparable angel" never went beyond a kiss and her delirium by him. She never loved Comte, and never lived under the same roof with him. He visited her in the rue Pavée, where her parents dwelled, and at her domicile in the rue Payenne; and she borrowed money from him and called on him in his apartment at 10, rue Monsieur-le-Prince, where the visitor may still see the armchair in which she sat. This humble piece of furniture was converted, even before her death, by the founder of the Religion of Humanity into a private altar before which he kneeled and worshipped the woman to whom he addressed the following invocation a few months after her demise. "Ton angélique inspiration dominera tout le reste de ma vie, tant publique que privée, pour présider encore à mon inépuisable perfectionnement, en épurant mes sentiments, agrandissant mes pensées et ennoblissant ma conduite" (*Système de politique positive*, I, xx). A morbid love on Comte's part, to be sure, but a love that will go down in history as the only one which enabled a lover, during his lifetime, to compel his followers to worship his beloved. If Clotilde de Vaux could have returned to earth and seen that Comte had made her the goddess of a new religion, she would surely have been filled with amazement.

For a complete account of the relations between Comte and Clotilde, see Charles de Rouvre, *L'Amoureuse Histoire d'Auguste Comte et de Clotilde de Vaux* (Paris, 1917), and the correspondence of Comte and Clotilde in the *Testament d'Auguste Comte* (Paris, 1884; 2d ed., 1896).

¹ As a matter of fact, Comte married Caroline Massin, a penniless prostitute whom he had "picked up" in the wooden galleries of the Palais-Royal. After seventeen years of unhappiness, caused to a great extent by poverty and by Caroline's adulterous conduct, they separated in 1842. During the rest of his life, in order to conform to his maxim, "L'homme doit nourrir la femme," Comte paid his wife an annuity, at first of three thousand francs, then of two thousand, and in his will he ordered that the annuity be continued as long as Mme Comte should live. Georges Deherme seems to have judged the latter correctly when he wrote: "Caroline Massin était certainement une prostituée, une dégénérée supérieure" (*Aux Jeunes Gens — Un Maître. Auguste Comte; Une Direction: le positivisme* [Paris, 1921], p. 12).

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In non-Christian countries, Wharton adds, fetishism, instead of being the accompaniment of a barbaric infancy, as Comte would have us believe, is frequently cotemporary with high metaphysical and artistic culture, economic energy, and industrial development: for example, in Egypt, where among the sacred animals are found the ram, the bull, the goat, the dog, the wolf, the cat, and the crocodile.

Positivism, Wharton states, is opposed by experience, both psychological and statistical. On the psychological side, according to the positive philosophy, the experience of all men, or at least that of the highest and most cultivated individuals, begins with theology and ends with atheism. The infant, in Comte's opinion, is a fetish worshipper. As a matter of fact, Wharton declares, there is in childhood no spontaneous progress from fetishism through polytheism to monotheism. Indeed, children have to be taught religion. Left to themselves, they would have none.

And so far as statistics are concerned, for one case of religious infancy maturing into a skeptical old age, twenty of the contrary may be found. Even Comte complains that his former friend Saint-Simon in his declining years fell into a "*tendance banale vers une vague religiosité*." And then there is the present-day case of Orestes Augustus Brownson who, abandoning the sociological aberrations of his early manhood, has become an ultramontane Catholic. Many other contemporary examples might be adduced in which Comte's order is reversed—that is, examples in which positivism comes first and theology last. In truth, it is rare, even in this age of metaphysical doubt, for men of eminence in any department to distinguish their riper years by avowed atheism. The educational history of the United States lends no support to Comte's theory, since the number of college students who profess religion is increasing year by year. And the same is true of the educational institutions of Europe.¹

¹ The remainder of Wharton's essay, which deals with Comte's polity and religion, I shall consider later in the present chapter.

In treating Comte's classification of the sciences, the critic declares that Comte has made an encyclopedic study of science, and has tried to discover how the method of inductive philosophy may be applied to the formation of a social and political science derived from the complex phenomena presented by humanity. It is at this point, our writer maintains, that Comte fails utterly, for, when he frames his science of sociology, he neglects to recognize the cravings of man as a spiritual intelligence, and to take into account the facts and experiences of the race in all past and present history. Everything considered, he errs in his endeavor to systematize social phenomena, and to reduce them to the orderly laws which pervade all true science, because he is a combination of the most opposite and contradictory attributes of the human intellect. He is an acute analyst, but is unskilled in synthesis. He may be considered the prophet of social science, but he is certainly not its expounder; he may be its Moses, but is surely not its Joshua.

Comte, the reviewer says, is not the only thinker who has failed in the application of the positive method to the scientific coördination of social phenomena and historical events. Comte thinks social science atheistic and humanitarian in its leading ideas; Littré thinks it democratic and radical; and Horace Binney Wallace regarded it as Christian and conservative. So the positive philosophy is a failure in the hands of its patrons and defenders, so far as efforts have been made to apply it to society, and Comte's efforts are the greatest failure of all. Comte will admit, our critic affirms, that the grand aim of science is the discovery of laws, and, through that discovery, the attainment of foresight and the power of action. But what are the laws of social phenomena which will enable us to predict with scientific certainty the political events of the next month in the United States or in any country of Europe?

Comte and his disciples, the reviewer continues, are attempting too much and aiming too high. Social science can never be made as exact as the other sciences in Comte's hierarchy.

Comte a mere metaphysical conception, and so should be discarded.

Towards the end of his article, the writer points out that Comte, while ignoring metaphysics and insisting that all practical knowledge must have a scientific base, forgets that mathematics, indeed all science, is based on assumptions. And God? Must we wait until he is as demonstrable as the laws of astronomical science before we believe in him? Comte himself admits the value of hypothesis as preparatory to the establishment of, or as experimental to, the verification of scientific laws. Well, then, "call religious truth an hypothesis if you will, and bring to it as a test of its accuracy all the results of human observation and experience, and see if all its main doctrines are not abundantly confirmed by a testimony as reliable as any offered by the most rigid science."

CRITICS OF GEORGE HENRY LEWES'S *A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY*

Lewes's history of philosophy (London, 1845, 1846; New York, 1857), because it was written by one "disbelieving in metaphysical certainty," stirred the ire of certain champions of metaphysics, and of course, many of the blows aimed at Lewes struck the founder of positivism.

In the *Southern Literary Messenger* (December, 1857, pp. 408-415), an anonymous critic charges Lewes, "a scholar of Comte," with ignoring Indian philosophy because in it there is a great deal of positivism. Had Lewes presented certain doctrines of that philosophy, "the modern French philosopher would have lost some of his laurels, but would not science, would not truth have been the gainer?" To support his contention, the writer quotes from Victor Cousin's analysis of Indian philosophy as follows:

The aim of every philosophical system in India is deliverance, or the sovereign good, in this world or in the other, or in both, if it is possible. . . . And how can we arrive at the sovereign good?

course, Munsell disagrees with these propositions, and questions the superior clearness and certainty of positivism, which Lewes thinks will put an end to all metaphysical speculation.¹

LOUIS MACKALL

Mackall's *Brief Comments on Comte's Positive Philosophy, as Translated by H. Martineau*, a pamphlet of twenty-four pages, was published in Washington, D. C., in 1858. The writer, a doctor of medicine who proclaimed himself the author of *An Account of the Reasoning Process*, *The Life in Nature*, and *The Power in Nature*, penned as a preface to his attack on positivism this brief advertisement: "The following notes or comments were written with a pencil on the margin of the pages, when reading the book over the second time. They were designed at first to guard a young friend against admitting into his mind, without reflection, Comte's atheistical principles. They are published under the persuasion that they may be of service to other students."²

Although Mackall's desire to protect American youth against Comte's theories was no doubt laudable, it must be admitted that his method of achieving his goal was ineffectual. Comte's aim, he says, is to subvert the received systems of theology and psychology, and to abolish the institution of religion, in order to make way for the positive philosophy. In seeking to attain his object, he first derides the truths of religion by artfully substituting superstitious notions for them, and then by representing, not the religious truths, but the superstitious notions, as being fictitious and the product of an infantile state of reasoning. And as if this positivist legerdemain were

¹ In an anonymous review of Lewes's history of philosophy in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, January, 1858, pp. 153-155, there are some insignificant remarks concerning Comte and positivism.

² Cf. Ferdinand Brunetière "En quelque matière que ce soit, je puis me passer, à la rigueur, de connaître ceux qui pensent comme moi, mais l'est ceux qui pensent autrement dont la connaissance est utile, ou indispensable même, à l'affermissement de mes idées ou de mes croyances" (*Sur les chemins de la croyance* (9th ed., Paris, 1902), p. 22).

weak-minded to detect these sophistries, are led astray by servilely adopting such of them as have been introduced into European science."

E. LINCOLN'S REVIEW OF BUCKLE'S *HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION IN ENGLAND*

Lincoln, a Baptist clergyman of Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, in a criticism of the first volume of Buckle's work,¹ characterizes it as one of the literary phenomena of the day and a book of superior power, the speculations of which are original and daring and the learning vast and varied. Its ingenuity and breadth of thought stimulate the reader, and its style is brilliant, vigorous, and natural. But, Lincoln observes, when the magic spell has lost its power, the reader begins to distrust the author, whose reasonings are unsound, facts unreliable, learning more comprehensive than accurate, illustrations specious, and arguments illogical. In short, the work is a union of strength and weakness.²

Buckle, Lincoln continues, is in the main a disciple of Comte, and an advocate of the principles of the positive philosophy.³ He denies the possibility of a scientific theology or of a universal religion; he rejects the inspiration of the Scriptures, and maintains that religion is a development of the intellect, beginning with polytheism and passing through monotheism to science, which repudiates religion as superstition. He nowhere asserts the personality of God and scoffs at the idea of a providential control of the weather or disease or national growth and disaster. As correlates of these views, he seems to

¹ *Christian Review*, January, 1859, pp. 113-136.

² Contemporary American opinion differed concerning Buckle's history. Theodore Parker, a liberal clergyman, spoke of it as follows, "I think it a great book, and know none so important since the *Novum Organum* of Bacon" (John Weiss, *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker* [New York, 1864], I, 334).

³ Francis Wharton, in his positivist bibliography in *A Treatise on Theism* (1859), calls Buckle's work "a ponderous apology for the positive philosophy in a distinct historical treatise."

early years and the occasion of my first published essay."¹ The study of Buckle led Fiske directly to Mill's *A System of Logic* and Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive*. Concerning the latter work, he writes: "It interested me as suggesting that the special doctrines of the several sciences might be organized into a general body of doctrine of universal significance. Comte's work was crude and often wildly absurd, but there was much in it that was very suggestive."²

Before Fiske entered the sophomore class at Harvard, his reading in philosophy and science had led him to heterodox opinions in religion, for which he was later almost expelled from college. His first article, a paper on Buckle's history, appeared in the *North American Review* during his senior year at Harvard.

In the beginning, Fiske was favorable to positivism, but by 1874, when his *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy . . . with Criticisms on the Positive Philosophy* was published, he had changed from admiration to semi-opposition.

THEODORE PARKER

Parker, an omnivorous reader, was one of the first Americans to take an interest in the *Cours de philosophie positive*. As I have shown elsewhere, William Henry Channing informs us that he read the six volumes of Comte's fundamental work as they came from the press, and discussed them with his friends Parker, George Ripley, and Orestes Augustus Brownson. I also brought out the fact that marked passages and marginal notes in Parker's copy (now in the Boston Public Library) indicate that he studied carefully only the fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes.³ In 1842, the date of the publication of the last volume of the *Cours*, Comte's name appeared in Parker's *A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*, and thereafter in a number

¹ Fiske, *Edward Livingston Youmans, Interpreter of Science for the People* (New York, 1894), p. 166.

² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

³ *A. C. and the U. S. (1816-1853)*, p. 15, and p. 25, n. 1.

reviewers of the positive philosophy: for example, the Reverend Thomas Hill, the Reverend Lyman Hotchkiss Atwater, the Reverend Oliver S. Munsell, and Professor Francis Wharton. However, we shall also find critics who have not yet appeared in the present volume: particularly the Reverend Joseph Henry Allen, who had the honor of publishing the first noteworthy study of Comte's philosophy ever produced outside of Europe;¹ Professor Andrew Preston Peabody, of Harvard College; the economist Henry Charles Carey; and an interesting, though eccentric, person, Calvin Blanchard, an atheistic author and publisher of New York City.

THOMAS HILL

The *Christian Review* (October, 1855, pp. 548-568) contains an article by Thomas Hill entitled "Essence and End of Infidelity," at the head of which is the following list of books: Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus*; Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*; Auguste Comte, *Cours de philosophie positive* and *Système de politique positive*; Harriet Martineau, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*; and George Henry Lewes, *Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences*.

The works named at the head of this article [says the Reverend Mr. Hill] are becoming naturalized in this country. They will undoubtedly produce some effect among us as a people. What that will be can be readily foreseen. Those who receive their teachings will abandon Christ and the Church. . . .

It is not at all probable, however, that they will meet with any general acceptance. . . . Comte has a very narrow circle of followers even in France. The poor old gentleman has to make constant appeals to them for a support. . . . His hand is against every man, and nearly every man's hand is against him. . . .

Infidelity is only another name for vice. . . . For an infidel, a thorough-going infidel who rejects Christianity and does all in his power to draw others after him into the abyss, we have no charity. We pity him as a man, but we abhor and denounce him as an infidel.

¹ *Christian Examiner*, March, 1851.

of Christianity, and passes by other churches till he reaches Protestantism, which he regards not so much as a form of Christianity as it annihilation.¹ "M. Comte constantly treats Romanism with respect," Atwater complains, "Protestantism with contempt, so far as their intrinsic merits are concerned." Protestantism, having retained, according to Comte, only the mischievous part of the Roman system, — that is, not its polity, but its doctrines, with partial and incidental modification, — is weak in itself, but it becomes a powerful coadjutor of positivism, since it is born of the positive spirit, and, with suicidal progress, removes every obstacle to its complete ascendancy.²

The metaphysical entities set up to govern society during the revolutionary era between the reigns of theology and positivism are, in Comte's view, the rights of man and unbounded liberty of conscience. These entities, Comte maintains, are the ruling forces introduced by Protestantism. They are in their nature revolutionary, and therefore temporary. They avail only for destruction; they simply remove barriers to the speedy enthronement of positivism. In the same category Comte places the dogmas of equality, popular sovereignty, and national independence. Provisionally necessary to the overthrow of the old régime, and to the conservation of society in the interim, they are now hindrances to a proper social reorganization.

We think [Atwater continues] we have now found the clew to M. Comte's meaning, when he teaches that the valuable element in Romanism was its polity, and that this was spoiled by the Christian doctrine which was mixed with it, while, purged of this poison, it is to be restored without taint or abatement during his sociological

travaux scientifiques nécessaires pour réorganiser la société (1822) contains all his future doctrines.

¹ Atwater's article appeared in the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, January, 1856, pp. 59-88.

² Cf. Charles de Rouvre: "Auguste Comte ne parle jamais des religions orientales; il parle peu de l'islamisme; il n'a que haine pour le protestantisme, coupable d'avoir déchaîné l'esprit de libre examen; mais le système catholique, c'est uniquement, constamment, totalement son modèle" (*Auguste Comte et le catholicisme* [Paris, 1928], p. 77).

The positive philosophy, Allen continues, has numerous partisans; the positive religion has practically none. Those persons who followed Comte in the domain of science decline his guidance in the domain of faith. The founder of positivism now prates of his unparalleled mission; he renders absolute verdicts and allows a sacerdotal fund to support him. As the self-appointed High Priest of Humanity, he has solemnized the three chief social sacraments, those concerning birth, marriage, and death. His religion has its catechism and its creed, its ritual of worship and its calendar of saints. And in it Humanity replaces God. The result of all these developments is that we cease to regard Comte as a theorist or a critic, and see him as a visionary and a fanatic.

Then Allen writes the following lines, which indicate that he had either visited Comte in his apartment at 10, rue Monsieur-le-Prince, or had received information from some one who had done so:

In one of those quiet suites of rooms, so pleasant to the memory of the visitor in Paris, with their grave, antique furniture, and their cool floors of polished chestnut, a few steps from the Odéon and the Luxembourg, dwells this self-chosen Pontiff of the human race. He is a man of not quite sixty, with the short stature, the large black eye, and dark features of southern France; his manner simple and courteous; his conversation rapid, impatient, and very trying to the unpractised ear; his recreation music, of which he is passionately fond. He imperiously disclaims all half-way discipleship, and is unsparing in his charges of hypocrisy on those who have followed his method but criticized his results. The slender collection of books shows little else, outside of science, than a few standard authors, selected after a slightly eccentric standard of his own. . . . On the mantel lie the *Imitation of Christ* and the *Divina Commedia*, well worn,—the guide of his morning and evening devotions.

Allen rightly adds that it is impossible to separate Comte's biography from his religion, and that, of his three guardian angels—his beloved, Clotilde de Vaux, his mother, Rosalie Boyer, and his servant, Sophie Bliot—it is the first-named who

demonstrable religion. Indeed, no contrast is more striking than that between the pains bestowed on many portions of it and their purely imaginary value.

A detailed criticism of the scheme Allen regards as superfluous. He will, however, take up a few points connected with it.

First of all, he declares, it must be acknowledged that its social structure, which professes to rest on the entire past, and to trace the lines of sympathy and connection with every preceding and contemporary stage of society, commands some respect for what it only attempts. And then, in judging Comte's system, we must allow for the intellectual despair which finds none of the conditions of such a structure among the conflicting creeds of Christendom, whether religious or philosophical. Nor should we forget Comte's view of atheism, which he describes as "a consecration of ignoble metaphysical sophisms, the last and least durable of all metaphysical phases," far inferior to the rudest philosophy of theism, and the natural adversary of the positive spirit. And finally, we must not overlook his characterization of materialism as "an abuse of deductive logic," in its influence on philosophy "gross, and often immoral."

Of all existing religious forms, Allen continues, Catholicism alone receives from Comte a respectful and comprehensive judgment. In noting the objects of its adoration, as they appear at successive stages of its development, — God the Father, the Trinity, the Divine Man, the Holy Mother, angels, and saints, and particularly the increasing and almost universal worship of the Virgin, — Comte thinks he sees the preparation of his own religion. Especially, influenced by the memory of Clotilde de Vaux, he believes that Humanity should be worshipped under that feminine symbol which the Church has made dearer than any other to the heart of Christendom.

In Comte's religion, together with the most complete ignoring of the very basis on which all theological dogma rests, we find

that positivism was forced to wait some ten years before it again appealed to the thinkers of the New World.

Although I have made a conscientious effort to examine all the contemporary American periodicals which seemed likely to contain criticisms of positivism and its founder, I have no doubt that I have overlooked some. However that may be, I am convinced that the discovery of a few more articles could in no wise alter the conclusions I draw at the end of my work. I might add that I have intentionally omitted a number of brief magazine references, since they yield no information of any value.

I desire to call attention in advance to the most important contribution to the history of positivism made in this volume: that is, to the new material in the chapters devoted to the village of Modern Times and to the apostleship of Henry Edger. Modern Times, the scene of Edger's crusade, and one of the most interesting manifestations of the peculiar brand of Americanism rampant in the eighteen fifties, has never received from scholars the treatment it deserves. And Edger's case affords a unique opportunity to follow the impressions of an intelligent man first through his belief in Christianity and various social theories, and then through his conversion to positivism and his attempt to win to his new religion not only his own family, but also the men and women of his anarchical environment. For several years, in his unpublished diary, as well as in portions of his published work, we can see him striving month by month, day by day to disseminate doctrines which he firmly believed would regenerate the world.

After the Civil War, — about 1870, to be more precise, — there was a mild revival of interest in positivism which continued for a score of years. I hope that some one will bring the study which I have begun in my two volumes down to the present day. For such an inquiry, clues to valuable matter may be found in William Frederick Poole's *An Index to Periodical Literature*, Woodbridge Riley's paper on "La Philoso-

phraseology. As a masculine conception, it is the "Great Being," the embodied, actual life of the generations of men. Under the feminine type (as truer to the instinct of the heart and the social feeling), it is "Humanity," the ideal, inward, higher life of mankind, a true object of religious reverence, to be adored in the visible image of holy and stainless Maternity, which in Catholic lands is worshipped almost, if not quite, to the exclusion of the Father and the Son.

Among the most interesting and suggestive portions of Comte's *Système de politique positive*, Allen says, are those which treat of education. The general and penetrating accuracy of the law of the three states, together with the qualifications and limitations with which it is to be understood, we may well enough take for granted. It is to be respected in the education of children. For seven years a purely physical training is ordered, with the discipline of maternal love (in this period the native and lovely creations of the religious fancy are the proper nourishment of the mind). Then for seven years the culture should be mostly esthetic, consisting of poetry, music, and drawing, and a knowledge of the five civilized tongues, French, Spanish, English, Italian, and German — an education of the school, to be sure, but still under the moral influence of the home. During this phase the vivid, artistic conceptions of polytheism will appeal to the mind — a natural and healthy tendency with which a judicious teacher will not interfere. Then follow seven years of systematic instruction, tracing by easy steps the ascending scale of human knowledge as embodied in Comte's hierarchy of the sciences, and accompanied by a parallel development of religious conceptions. Then come the critical stages of self-questioning, doubt, and unbelief, the painful intellectual crisis of thoughtful youth; and at last the calm acknowledgment of the universal order, with the system of social duties it implies.

Such, Allen declares, is the general idea or plan by which the total life of humanity should be reproduced in the growth

death; it should be strict monogamy, guarded by the special sanctities of perpetual widowhood. The mother is the type of the great teacher, and the true providence. In Comte's scheme, "women's rights" are scornfully set aside. Woman should not toil for a livelihood, hold property, or inherit. In the three essential characters of mother, wife, and daughter, the sphere of woman is purely domestic. As the visible type and representative of Humanity, she is to be regarded with an affectionate and reverent homage. She is, furthermore, the natural ally of the spiritual power, and the medium of almost all moral and humanizing agencies. And so, somewhat mistily, the worship of Humanity runs into a fantastic and sentimental adoration of its feminine incarnation at our own fireside. Comte is surely not serious, Allen suggests, when he offers such a code of sublunary ethics.

As to the structure, or organization, of the spiritual power, the visible hierarchy that shall embody this ambitious dream, Comte does not give a clear notion, although he emphasizes the influence of the positive priesthood of the future for moral truth, discipline, and good in general, and also the immense advantage a religion divorced from theology is to have over the beliefs and worships of the past.

So far as Comte's scheme is comprehensible, Allen regards it as premature, vicious in its foundation, impossible, and absurd. Outside the pale of criticism, and mere idiosyncrasies of a self-centered and despotic brain, are Comte's discussions of the model of a future hierarchy, its solemn observances, and the training of its acolytes to inherit worthily their spiritual function. It is by inspiration, Allen concludes, not by artificial and set training; it is by special messengers of the living Word, not by constructions founded on the most consummate knowledge of social science, that the march of humanity is to be guided to the diviner kingdom of the future.

There is a lesson in this *finale* of the positive philosophy, with its cognate Religion of Humanity. It is another splendid *reductio ad absurdum* by which the loftiest human reason demonstrates its own insufficiency. It leads us to bow with a deeper reverence before the Author of revealed truth, whose 'foolishness is wiser than men.'

OLIVER S. MUNSELL

Because of man's sinful nature, says the Reverend Mr. Munsell,¹ social organization is difficult, even when, to motives to virtue and interest which reason reveals are added the influences and moral power pertaining to the ideas of God, of an endless life, and of moral accountability. Comte, "the very prince of modern materialists," sets all these things aside, and therefore his efforts towards social reorganization are utterly valueless. His ethical system especially is unworthy of serious consideration, since everything in it is to be left to duty and obligation. His slogan is "The greatest good of society, not of the individual," but he overlooks the fact that there is in positivism no absolute ground of duty or of obligation, and so no sufficient reason can be assigned why any person should sacrifice himself for his fellowmen.

Nevertheless, Munsell continues, although Comte has failed to inaugurate a valid system of sociology, he deserves credit for appreciating its possibility and necessity. He has, besides, indicated some of its essential elements: for instance, he has designated the family as the true *social* unit, and so has placed his system far in advance of the other socialistic schemes of the age. His blunders are due to the fact that he did not determine carefully the real elements of human nature, did not recognize man as a spiritual being susceptible of moral influences, and did not sense the corrupted and depraved state of the affections. If he had done those things, he would not have fallen into the grave error of postulating, without reservation,

¹ This, the third, part of Munsell's article on positivism appeared in the *Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, April, 1858, pp. 220-238.

and in those of each week the topics of contemplation and adoration are arbitrarily determined. And even as to the gestures to be used in repeating the formulas of faith there is to be no discretion.

Comte was sure that the Romish Church would gradually become positive, and so he graciously agreed that, until positivist temples could be erected, the old churches, in proportion as they fell into disuse, should be accepted and employed by the positivist priesthood. Directions for building the temples are laid down by Comte: they must orientate towards Paris, the metropolis of humanity. A sacred wood is to surround the temple, and in each temple there is to be placed as a symbol of Humanity the image of a woman of thirty with her son in her arms.¹ Even the trappings of the religious processions are regulated by Comte. Banners are to be carried, on the white sides of which will be the holy image, and on the green sides the sacred formula of positivism.²

The positive priesthood is endowed with almost unlimited power. The priests are, each in his special sphere, to control education, to administer the sacraments, and to promulgate the ethics by which their particular parishioners are to be influenced and their conduct controlled. The priests are to have the government of the public treasury, disbursing it as they think fit. Marriage with the priest is obligatory. The ultimate control of this enormous and absolute sacerdotalism is a high priest whose see is to be Paris.³

Gutenberg (Modern Industry), Shakespeare (Modern Drama), Descartes (Modern Philosophy), Frederick the Great (Modern Polity), Bichat (Modern Science). Besides, each day glorifies some great servant of humanity. A supplementary day, which corresponds to December 31, is devoted to the "Fête universelle des Morts." The additional day of leap years is reserved for a "Fête générale des Saintes Femmes." July 14, 1789, marks the end of Christian chronology.

¹ Clotilde de Vaux died at the age of thirty-one.

² This formula is: "L'Amour pour principe, l'Ordre pour base, et le Progrès pour but."

³ Comte appointed himself the first High Priest of Humanity. He has never had a successor.

Comte prescribed what course is to be taken by the priests in respect to every contingency. The method of study under the priesthood is prescribed. The boy, after receiving the sacrament of initiation at the age of fourteen, is to go to the school adjoining the temple of Humanity. He undergoes a novitiate of seven years, each of which is to have its specific topic. Then Comte decrees that during his scientific preparation the pupil will be monotheistic, in adolescence pantheistic, and in maturity atheistic — a decree which, Wharton says, gives a good idea of Comte's sublime self-reliance and profound psychological ignorance.

Naturally, Francis Wharton, a Protestant, and an American Protestant into the bargain, found the prescriptions of the Religion of Humanity irksome, because they permitted no diversity of tastes. His objections he lists under four headings as follows:

(a) The sanctions of Comte's religion destroy human liberty. The positive creed is not propounded to be studied and accepted; it is a creed as to which there can be no inquiry.¹

(b) They substitute for a faith which, if false, is believed to be real, one which, if real, is believed to be false. In other words, they substitute for a believed truth a confessed sham. What can produce a more profound sense of unreality than the consciousness that we are worshipping a deity who is nothing but our own memory of the dead, who is avowedly a mere doll-providence, made and dressed for us by the priest, and handed to us to be worshipped in order to satisfy our craving for the Infinitely Lovely and Great?

¹ Cf. Anatole France: "*Je ne suis pas positiviste. Je peux avoir de bonnes raisons pour ne pas l'être, j'en ai aussi de mauvaises, et ce sont les plus fortes, et celles-là, j'ose les avouer: Je n'ai pas assez de vertu pour croire et professer la religion de l'Humanité. Je n'ai pas le courage de renoncer aux fantaisies, aux caprices de la conscience individuelle. J'aime mes erreurs. Je ne veux pas renoncer à la liberté délicieuse de m'égarer, de me perdre, de perdre mon âme*" (ed. cit., XVII, 372).

great end of man is to live for his fellowmen, there is a sort of sublimity, which the details of the scheme unfortunately destroy. Although the theorizing of the catechism leaves an unsatisfactory impression, the book has worth in awakening thought. It tells the truth about many systems that exist, and gives hints of work which may be accomplished without forsaking present institutions. Especially the eleventh *entretien* on "The General History of Religion" is very valuable. Few more candid observers than Comte have ever written on the progress of society and the past work of man.¹

HENRY CHARLES CAREY

In 1858 and 1859 Henry Charles Carey² published in Philadelphia his *Principles of Social Science*, which in its day attracted a great deal of attention in both the United States and Europe.³ In the opening chapter, "Of Science and its Methods," the author discusses Auguste Comte and his method.

In Carey's opinion, the formulæ of mathematics are merely instruments which facilitate the acquisition of knowledge—that is to say, they are only a key to science, to nature's laws,

¹ Other references to Comte's polity and religion may be found in the following works: Theodore Parker, *Sermons of Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology* (Boston, 1853), pp. xxxix, lxii; anon, *Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, December, 1853, p. 476; Parke Godwin, *Pulnam's Monthly Magazine*, June, 1854, p. 632; Albert Taylor Bledsoe, professor of mathematics in the University of Virginia, *A Theodicy, or Vindication of the Divine Glory* (New York, 1856), pp. 76, 219; Charles Woodruff Shields, *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, January, 1858, pp. 1-27; the Reverend William N. Pendleton, *Science a Witness for the Bible* (Philadelphia, 1860), pp. 72-74.

² Carey was born in Philadelphia in 1793. In 1817 he became a partner in the publishing house of Carey, Lea, and Carey. Although deficient in schooling, he read widely, and so acquired a superficial knowledge of many branches of learning. In 1835 he published his *Essay on the Rate of Wages*, and in 1837-1840 his *Principles of Political Economy*. He died in 1879. For the long list of books and pamphlets from his pen, see William Elder, *A Memoir of Henry C. Carey* (Philadelphia, 1880), pp. 37-39. See also Charles H. Levermore, "Henry C. Carey and his Social System," in the *Political Science Quarterly*, 1890, pp. 553-582.

³ A French translation entitled *Principes de la science sociale*, by Saint-Germain-Leduc and Auguste Planche, was published in Paris in 1861.

universe, it is as a whole that it is inaccessible to us; whereas, in investigating man or society, our difficulty is in penetrating the details." On the contrary, Carey retorts, it is the details of life around us that we need to study, beginning with analysis and proceeding to synthesis, as does the chemist when he resolves the piece of granite into atoms, and thus acquires the secret of the composition of the mass.

If we desire to understand the history of man in past ages or in distant lands, we must commence by studying him in the present, and having mastered him in the past and present, we may then be enabled to predict the future. . . . To do this would not, however, be to adopt the course of M. Comte, who gives us the distant and unknown — the societies of past ages — as a means of understanding the movements of the men by whom we are surrounded, and of predicting what will be those of future men. . . . The necessary consequence of this inverse and erroneous method is that he is led to arrive at conclusions directly the reverse of those to which men's natural instincts lead them; and directly opposed, too, to the tendencies of thought and action in all the times of advancing civilization, whether in the ancient or modern world; and as a necessary consequence, he leaves his readers as much at a loss to understand the causes of disturbance that now exist, or the remedy required to be applied, as would a physician who should limit the study of his patient to an examination of the body in a mass, omitting all inquiry into the state of the lungs, the stomach, or the brain. His system of sociology does not explain the past, and cannot, therefore, be used to direct the future; and the reason why it does not and cannot is that he has declined to use the method of physics, the philosophy which studies the near and the known for the purpose of obtaining power to comprehend the distant and the unknown — which studies the present to obtain knowledge by help of which to understand the causes of events in the past, and predict those which are bound to flow from similar causes in the future.

Social science, as taught in some colleges of Europe and the United States, Carey asserts, is now on a level with the chemical science of the early eighteenth century, and it will remain there so long as its teachers persist in looking inwards to their own minds and inventing theories, instead of looking outwards to

diminished his contempt for mankind, and Auguste Comte's positive philosophy "suggested a substitute for that wholesale violence and fraud alternately perpetrated by monarchs and majorities, and called government." In his quest for truth he followed no one blindly; in fact, his conclusions differed widely from those of his most esteemed teachers. From Charles Fourier he deduced that the passions are not implanted in men to furnish virtue's malice with victims, and that opinionism, law, and moralism are lingering relics of the savage vindictiveness which necessarily incrusts the first stage of religion. From Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* he deduced the naturalness of supernaturalism, and learned that man instinctively aspires to almightiness and universally believes in himself magnified thereunto. Guided by this clue, he rapidly discovered that the real significance of belief in God, or anthropomorphism, is that, through the discovery, modification, and harmonious combination of natural laws, through development, man may be as free, as happy, and substantially as almighty as he instinctively imagines his abstract subjectivity to be.

Towards the end of the same pamphlet, Blanchard states that when Harriet Martineau's translation of Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive* first came to his notice in 1854, he saw immediately that it supplied the necessary foundation for Fourier's system, in which he had unbounded confidence. He then decided to do all that lay in his power to forward that human perfection which was no longer a mere abstraction, but a mathematical, calculable certainty. To that end, he placed before the American public two editions of Miss Martineau's translation of the *Cours* (1855, 1858) and "an elegant steel portrait of Comte [by Antoine Étex] for framing," Feuerbach's *Essence*, Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, Greg's *The Creed of Christendom*, Volney's *New Researches in Ancient History*, Taylor's *Lectures on Free Masonry and The Devil's Pulpit*, James O'Connell's *Vestiges of Civilization*, Henry Edger's *Modern*

social science, and show that sociology is a science, connected with, and depending on, every previous one; thus mathematically demonstrating the utter futility of attempting, henceforth, to construct the social fabric on any other basis than positivism."

Three years later Blanchard published the second work in which we are interested here — namely, *The Essence of Science: or, The Catechism of Positive Sociology and Physical Mentality*. By a Student of Auguste Comte — that is, by Calvin Blanchard. This pamphlet of ninety-two pages is, as the subtitle suggests, in the form of questions and answers (forty-six of each). The opening lines of the preface follow:

We must accept the whole of science, or we may as well refuse it altogether. Piecemeal, it can have no living existence; and therefore, can yield us no benefits. Its rightful domain extends through all, from lowest to highest. To exclude science from sociology, government, religion, from the highest of which we are capable of conceiving, is to deprive it of its head; and man of all which can render life worth having.

Because all religion, hitherto, has been false, and all government has been despotic, we must not conclude, Blanchard cautions, that true religion and free government are impossible. Government must always be founded on religion, and false religion must inevitably produce false and despotic government. Where are we to look, Calvin asks, for the true religion which must be the base of free government? To earth, he replies, or at farthest, to the material system to which we belong. Mystery and ultra-naturalism have been ransacked in vain; the religion of the unknown, together with the ignorance which engendered it, must pass away. Whole, unitary, all-regulating, all-pervading, complete science, together with the corresponding art, must be law; and its direction, diffusion, and general application must be the true religion of the earth and of material and materialistic man.

The positive sociology, Calvin continues, with the essence of science for its foundation, will replace "our crude, unscientific,

obstacles, from all the hindrances which the discordancy of its own action, and the discordancy of the action of nature other than human, now oppose.

The Government of Science will find out nature's laws and facilitate, to the utmost possible, their operation; thus eliminating despotism, which wholly consists in ignorantly making laws for nature to go by.

The Government of Science must, therefore, be the only possible free government, the sole remedy for monarchical, aristocratical, and majority despotism, and for all quackery and imposture.

When the religion of science is inaugurated, Blanchard continues, man will confide in "sociologians" just as during the palmiest days of the Catholic Church he confided in theologians; with this great difference, that the disciples of the religion of science will be their own judges with respect to results, which are to be produced in *this matter-of-fact world*.

Although Calvin was, as we shall see presently, opposed to Comte's Religion of Humanity, a Comtean influence is noticeable in the following lines on the adoration of women by men:

When the true religion — the Religion of Science — supersedes all false religions, the type of the beautiful in nature, instead of that of the horrible, will be the object of both private and public worship. . . . Kneel proudly, then, at the feet of her whom you love . . . and there expound to her the philosophy of your attitude.

Another pamphlet by Blanchard bears the following title: *A Message to "The Sovereign People" of the United States; Exhibiting to Their Majesties the Infernal Treachery or Worse Inability of Their Religious Counsellors and of Their Political "Servants," Proving the Identity of the Theological and Ethical Delusions, Exposing the Elective Franchise Hoax, and Revealing a New and Self-Evidently Efficient Remedy for Superstition, Despotism, and Evil* (1860). In this work the author tilts against a number of his usual enemies: "theologico-moralistico" civilians and government; the Bible; moralism and virtue (that is, Christian depravity cloaked in hypocrisy); miracle rubbish; Heaven; immortality; religious praying; Christian

as the basis of religion and government; the scientific development, and the artistic combination, of the force of nature and the power of man; free love; materialism; hatred of priestcraft and statecraft, and so forth. Paine's *The Age of Reason*, Calvin thinks, negatively prepared the way for the introduction of science and art into social architecture, and for the inauguration of the knowable, the practical, the humane, and the efficient, in place of the mysterious, the speculative, the vindictive, the provisional, and the otherwise abortive.

Comte's law of the three states Blanchard formulates thus:

Human progress is generally divisible into three ages: the age of mystery, the age of reason, and the age of practical science and art. These answer to the theological, the critical, and the positive stages of the Grand Revolution . . . ; of which revolution the author-hero was Auguste Comte.

In Calvin's opinion, — an opinion which would scarcely have pleased Comte, — Charles Fourier was Comte's John the Baptist, and the remarkable works of these two men, the *Social Destiny of Man* and the *Cours de philosophie positive*, are carrying on a constructive, and therefore noiseless and unostentatious, revolution. Then, with uncommon sagacity, Blanchard adds:

[These works] do not (particularly the *Cours*) appeal to the common understanding, and the masses will know but little about them until they feel their beneficent effects. But the keen observer and the social artist perceive that they have already given a new tone to all the higher literature of Western Europe, and even, to some extent, to that of the United States.

The clergy, Blanchard goes on, are guilty of a conspiracy of silence against Comte and the *Cours*.

They are at length aware that the slander and abuse which they have hellowed forth from the pulpit against Paine have advertised his works more effectually than ten per cent of their own salaries could have done through the newspapers; and hence the profound silence which they maintain with respect to the personality of Comte and to the name of *The Positive Philosophy*.

followed no one blindly. However, among the various influences on his opinions that of Comte is discernible now and then, but in such an ill-defined, nebulous, jumbled form as to render it almost unrecognizable. I might add that it is doubtful whether Comte would have welcomed as a disciple this materialist, free-lover, and fierce hater of Christianity and established government. It is likely that he would have preferred to regard him, not as a follower, but rather as a distressing product of that intellectual, moral, and social anarchy which he felt it his mission to expel from the Occident. And certainly, could he have learned that Blanchard disapproved of his "second career," his severity would have known no bounds.

Be that as it may, Calvin Blanchard entertained only kindly feelings towards the author-hero of the Grand Revolution, even in his errors. In his biography of Thomas Paine (p. 92) he wrote:

The mental effort which produced the *Cours de philosophie positive* was too much for the brain of any one man to make with impunity, as the subsequent writings of the great positivist show. With respect to these, and particularly to Comte's positive religion, Mr. Lewes very considerably remarks, "let us draw a veil over them"; and I, who have made Comte a study, will add that any other view than this, with respect to the writings which Comte sent forth to the world after the *Cours*, is most unjust.¹

¹ A final extract from Blanchard's iconoclastic pen. Concerning Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, presidential candidates in 1860, he says:

"Whilst writing this, the two great parties of spoilseekers in the United States have been caucusing for, and have at length decided on, two individuals out of some thirty millions, one of whom is to be demagogism's cat's-paw general for the next four years.

"The qualifications of one of these candidates for the presidential chair consists in his having been a 'farm laborer, a common workman in a sawmill, and a boatman on the Wabash and Mississippi rivers'; a woodchopper, a hunter, a soldier in the Black Hawk War, a clerk in a store, and finally, a sham-law manufacturer and monger—a member of a legislature and a lawyer. The qualifications of his opponent on the political racecourse are probably about as different in respect to value from those just enumerated as fiddledeem is from fiddledee. Those convenient tools of both parties, those chessmen with which the political game is played—The People. . . ." (*The Life of Thomas Paine*, p. 54).

my feet. . . . I have ceased to believe that any revelation written for one age or in one age can be adapted to all ages.¹

Three years later she declared that she was made uncomfortable by Buckle's *History of Civilization*. She added: "I must read every word of Buckle. It seems to me the most remarkable book of the age—bold, clear, strong, comprehensive, candid, and, above all, free."²

It is not at all surprising that Mrs. Child's *The Progress of Religious Ideas* irritated such devout Christians as Francis Wharton and Lyman Hotchkiss Atwater. Her preface begins as follows: "I would candidly advise persons who are conscious of bigoted attachment to any creed or theory not to purchase this book. Whether they are bigoted Christians or bigoted infidels, its tone will be likely to displease them. My motive in writing has been a very simple one. I wished to show that *theology is not religion*." She adds that she expects to offend "devotional people," since no one who truly revered the spirit of Christianity has ever before tried the experiment of placing it precisely on a level with other religions. She says that, in tracing the evolution of one and the same spiritual current through successive ages, as well as the influences of the various religions on one another, she hopes to show that Christianity, far from being a strange gift suddenly dropped from heaven for a chosen few, was the product of a gradual growth, and that it borrowed elements from the religions of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, and from Buddhism.³ If the Apostles, she continues, had returned to earth in the sixth century, they would not have recognized the then existing Christianity as the doctrines they taught and the worship they practised.⁴ She also expresses the opinion that it is impossible to exaggerate the evil work that *theology has done in the world*.⁵

¹ *Letters of Lydia Maria Child* (Boston, 1883), p. 74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³ III, 419, 420.

⁴ III, 422.

⁵ III, 431.

unwilling to hearken to a man who, they declared, was presenting nothing new, but only the doctrines of Hume arrayed in a modern garb. An independent thinker, Parke Godwin, who found in Comte much to commend, disagreed with some of his fundamental principles. The economist Henry Charles Carey was of the opinion that Comte's method in sociology was unsound. Theodore Parker, whose writings and sermons were held by orthodox followers of Christ as little short of blasphemous, regarded the *Cours de philosophie positive* as a remarkable work, but far too materialistic; and John Fiske, although he found many suggestive hints in it, thought it often crude and ridiculous. And finally, the materialist Calvin Blanchard, though he sanctioned most of the principles of Comte's philosophy, was naturally obliged to dissent when the High Priest of Humanity proclaimed himself the head of a religion derived in great part from Catholicism. So, then, judging by the material I have presented thus far, it would seem that the Reverend Oliver S. Munsell was right, at least in respect to the United States, when he declared that probably nobody could be found who approved of Comte's system without reservation. However, as an amiable sage once observed, it is not wise to reckon without the exception which is said to accompany every rule. Suddenly, in the spring of 1854, there arrived at 10, rue Monsieur-le-Prince a letter from Long Island, New York — a letter from a grateful man who, after years of groping in religion, socialism, and communism, had at last found comfort in an unreserved acceptance of positivism. This man, an Englishman, Henry Edger by name, who, if I mistake not, was Comte's most beloved disciple, devoted the latter half of his life to the propagation of his master's theories. His attempt to implant the Religion of Humanity in the barren soil of New York State forms, I think, one of the most arresting, and at the same time one of the most distressing, experiences that any mortal has ever gone through. The *milieu* in which Edger lived and his apostleship will furnish the matter for the next two chapters of the present book.

race. The people of the various States every few years revise their constitutions, and new laws are continually made by thirty-odd legislatures. New sects in religion are springing up, new systems of ethics and metaphysics, new ideas of society. . . . In America . . . it is newness that gives success. People believe in progress and improvement; why should they not prefer the new hotel, steamboat, machine, or establishment of whatever kind to the old? It is not to be wondered at that they should imagine that morals and religion may be subject to the laws of progress, and that the last-invented creed may be an improvement upon the one promulgated two centuries or two decades of centuries ago.¹

The most alarming of the various aberrations which seized Americans at this time was undoubtedly that which is called, for want of a better name, spiritualism. This madness — the effect of which still lingers in the United States — had a profound influence on the thought, the feeling, and the character of the entire nation. It even led large numbers of people to modify their religious beliefs: those persons who believed, found in the phenomena of spiritualism reasons for strengthening their faith, and those who doubted or denied a future life came to see in the spiritual manifestations irrefragable proof of its reality. The wave of interest in this extravagance was so irresistible that it was almost impossible for one to remain neutral. The periodicals of the time are filled with arguments for and against the mania, and the books written on the subject would form a library of no inconsiderable size.

Like some other contemporary fads, spiritualism was not an importation. It was an American product pure and simple, and, although it soon made its way to Europe, American ingenuity should be accorded the dishonor of its invention.

The first definite interest in spiritualism — that is to say, in a belief in communication between the living and the dead who survive in some other mode of existence — began in 1848, when the famous Fox sisters, Leah, Margaret, and Catherine,

¹ Nichols, II, 17, 18

thought, speech, and action, and a yearning for the redress of human wrongs.

The struggle to win for women the same legal, educational, political, and social status as men was a hard one, since the leaders of the crusade were obliged to combat century-old traditions, customs, and prejudices. The Church insisted that woman's place was in the home, and the devout quoted the Bible to prove that divine Providence had designed for her an inferior position in society. Most men and, strange to say, most women were opposed to the experiment, as were political leaders and professional reformers in other fields. Nevertheless, against great odds and in the face of unimaginable contempt and ridicule, the movement slowly got under way. As early as 1826 Frances (Fanny) Wright, a wealthy young Scotchwoman, had come to the United States and for several years had advocated there the emancipation of her sex. She was followed in the thirties by Ernestine L. Rose, and by 1840 scores of blatant, unsexed females were scurrying from one end of the Union to the other, making speeches, holding conventions, and browbeating or cajoling the sheeplike multitude into espousing their outlandish views. In no other event in the history of the United States has an active, militant, obstinate minority so prevailed over the sluggish herd, with the possible exception of the victory of the handful of irresponsible reformers who in 1919 brought on their native land the curse of national prohibition.

Emboldened by the successful outcome of the campaign for the emancipation of their sisters, certain women began to find their normal apparel too cumbersome for their feverish activities. "Pantaloons for pantalets" became their battle cry. But alas, as the French put it, it is the first step which costs. Who would take that momentous step? The heroine who dared to defy the world's derision was not long in presenting herself. One lovely day Amelia Jenks Bloomer, an ardent temperance advocate, appeared before the amused *badauds*

tion; Mormonism with its sanctified polygamy; and Perfection with its free love and omni-gamy.¹

Although spiritualism, women's rights, bloomerism, and free love seemed to sensible contemporaries the height of human folly, it remained for another movement — the establishment of socialistic communities — to furnish the crowning piece.

Since the end of the seventeenth century the United States, because of the cheapness of land and freedom from interference by the political authorities, had been chosen by European visionaries for their social and religious experiments. In 1694 the German Pietists set up an establishment near Philadelphia, and in 1735 Johann Conrad Beissel founded a Dunker community in Pennsylvania. In 1776 a small band of English Shaking Quakers (Shakers), under the leadership of Ann Lee, settled at Watervliet, New York, whence they spread to New England and the West and Middle West. Later, George Rapp brought the Harmonists from Germany to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and other Germans — Bäumeler, Christian Metz, and Keil — founded, respectively, the communities of Zoar (Ohio), Amana (Iowa), and Bethel (Missouri). Bishop Hill (Illinois) was peopled by Swedes; the Frenchman Étienne Cabet led his Icarians first to Texas and then to Illinois and Missouri; and the Welshman Robert Owen established his famous colony at New Harmony, Indiana. Native Americans, not to be outdone by foreign dreamers, also began to form communistic societies. John Humphrey Noyes, as I have said already, started his organization at Oneida, New York, in 1847, and between 1840 and 1850, thanks to the efforts of Albert Brisbane,² Charles A. Dana, Horace Greeley, and others, Fourierism so spread that some thirty-four "phalanxes" were founded, the most celebrated of which was Brook Farm, established at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, by George Ripley. By the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

² Brisbane was not unacquainted with positivism. See Redelia Brisbane, *Albert Brisbane: A Mental Biography* (Boston, 1893), pp. 264-266.

Warren, of whom Dr. Nichols speaks as follows: "An ingenious, thoughtful little man, and a thorough Yankee. He could turn his hand to many things. He was a bit of a musician. He invented a method of stereotyping and a printing press. Finally, pondering over the failure of the system of Owen, he invented a new theory of society."¹

Moncure Daniel Conway gives the following description of Warren: "He was a short, thick-set man about fifty years of age, with a bright, restless blue eye, and somewhat restless, too, in his movements. His forehead was large, descending to a good full brow; his lower face, especially the mouth, was not of equal strength, but indicated a mild enthusiasm. He was fluent, eager, and entirely absorbed in his social ideas. It was pleasant to listen to him. . . ."²

Josiah Warren was born at or near Boston, Massachusetts, in 1798. He married at the age of twenty, and shortly afterward settled in Cincinnati, Ohio, as an orchestra leader and a teacher of music. In 1821 he patented a lard-burning lamp, which yielded him a considerable amount of money. After hearing a lecture by Robert Owen, he was converted to Owenism, and early in 1825 he removed with his family to the communistic colony which that reformer was founding at New Harmony, Indiana. When this experiment failed, Warren came to the conclusion that the chief defect of communism was combination, or association, which so suppressed individuality that initiative and a sense of responsibility were completely discouraged. In addition, he argued that combination required government, and that government is opposed to liberty, because in every combined organization there must be order, which can be obtained only by authority and obedience. Starting with these ideas, Warren developed his theory of the "sovereignty of the individual"—that is to say, a society in which there should be no government, no laws, no police, and in

¹ *Forty Years of American Life*, II, 39.

² *Fortnightly Review*, July 1, 1865, p. 423.

In January, 1833, Warren founded his first periodical, a four-page weekly, *The Peaceful Revolutionist*, and in 1835 he and a number of his friends went to Tuscarawas County, Ohio, where they purchased four hundred acres of land and established the village of Equity. After spending two years there and erecting a sawmill, dwellings, and stores, the reformers departed when they discovered that malaria, ague, and fever were prevalent in the region. Warren returned to New Harmony, which, despite its lack of success as a communistic experiment, had become a flourishing town. For several years thereafter he devoted his time to inventions, one of the most important of which was a cylinder printing press. In 1842 he opened his second Equity Store in New Harmony, conducted it for two years, and then turned again to invention. In 1847 he founded the village of Utopia, thirty miles from Cincinnati, where he passed three years in applying his Equity principles to the social structure. At this time he wrote: "Peace, harmony, ease, security, happiness will be found only in individuality."¹

In 1850 Warren ceased his efforts to improve society in Indiana and Ohio, and removed to New York City, where he made the acquaintance of the eccentric reformer Stephen Pearl Andrews, whom he converted from Fourierism to the doctrines of the sovereignty of the individual and cost the limit of price. Andrews soon became Warren's most able lieutenant. In 1851 he expounded his master's theories in a course of lectures in New York City on "The Science of Society," which appeared later in book form.²

¹ Quoted by Baillie, *op cit.*, p. 55.

² Andrews (1812-1886), a native of Templeton, Massachusetts, after studying law, devoted much of his time to the abolition of slavery. He introduced the shorthand system of Isaac Pitman into the United States. Not content with the thirty-two languages with which he was said to be acquainted, he invented an international language called *Alwato*. He also founded *universology*, a deductive science of the universe, and outlined a semi-anarchistic system of society, the *Pantarchy*. About the middle of the nineteenth century he became connected with the radical reformers of New York City.

Williamsburg, New York,
November 2, 1851.

. . . The practical operations in founding an equitable village vary, of course, with every individual case. But the means required are simple enough in a country like this, where land — new land — can be had so cheaply. At Modern Times the first operation was to apply to some landowners, and obtain from them a binding legal document, compelling them within a certain period to sell a certain tract of land in acre lots at a fixed price (and a pretty good one, too!) to such persons as were named by Andrews and the first three or four "actual settlers." Some ninety acres were then surveyed and mapped out into streets and avenues. . . . Each "block" contains four acres, each acre is a lot; and Mr. Andrews professes to sell no more than three lots to any one person.

The next proceeding was for a house to be erected by one purchaser, which was forthwith let by him "at cost" to some friends of his, young men employed to build it. Shortly after this first house was begun, Mr. Warren went down and built a house, subsequently sold "at cost" — *i.e.*, money for what cost money (120 dollars, I believe), and labor for labor. The purchaser is a good practical mechanic, a smith and boilermaker; but like most Yankees, able to turn his hand to anything, and in particular is a well-skilled carpenter. As soon as this second house was habitable (the first had been occupied from the day the roof was on, and had been completed at leisure afterwards), Mr. Warren began his "college," now completed sufficiently for occupation: a square brick building, thirty-two feet each way, containing two stories and attics; the ground floor being occupied as workshops (a smithy and a carpenter's shop) and a store. The upper part is dwellings — already in part occupied.

The exceedingly small cost of the materials required for building a house at Modern Times is partly owing to an invention of Mr. Warren's for making sun-burnt bricks out of mere gravel and lime. . . .

The first settlers in our equitable town must all be men having some means of existence independent of these operations. They must have some trade or occupation that can be pursued at the new settlement, the market for their produce existing elsewhere. The first practical step in the actual carrying out of the reform will be, probably, the opening of the store. The goods being sold at cost will be an inducement to all the neighbors to come and deal there. . . .

The College Inn



Modern Times June 1852

A pencil sketch of Modern Times, Long Island, showing the college and the house of the Hayward family A. J. Macdonald Papers, Yale University Library.

The men of Modern Times, Edger adds, nearly all of whom are engaged in building, follow Warren's principles. For example, the master builder receives for his work no money, but only a compensation for his helpers and for the materials he has furnished. In return, those persons whom he has served give him their labor notes, which entitle him to a certain amount of their work in exchange for his services. So, in Modern Times, labor, not commerce, is king.

After observing that he fears that work will run short in the village when building operations lag, Edger closes his letter with these words: "I hope to have only good news to tell you of this movement, which certainly does inspire its votaries here . . . with a confidence and zeal that cannot be surpassed, and have, perhaps, seldom been equalled."

In a subsequent letter (March, 1854),¹ which shows that he has taken up his abode at Modern Times, Edger says that during the previous year the young social experiment passed through a dangerous crisis brought on by a controversy in the New York *Tribune*, in the course of which Henry James and Horace Greeley defended the institution of marriage and Stephen Pearl Andrews attacked it, to the great alarm of all those hypocrites whose morality would hardly bear scrutiny.² Of course, Edger remarks, Andrews was finally silenced, and the dreaded Modern Times, which conservatives affect to despise, was routed. Shocked by Andrews's stand, curious visitors, who had previously flocked to the new settlement because of sensational articles concerning it in the newspapers, have now ceased their visits, but they have been replaced by substantial men who intend to devote their time and money to the movement.

Besides the testimony of Edger, we are fortunate in having

¹ *Ibid.*, July 22, 1854, p. 686.

² Andrews, an advocate of free love, later published all the documents of the quarrel in a pamphlet entitled *Love, Marriage, and Divorce, and the Sovereignty of the Individual. A Discussion by Henry James, Horace Greeley, and Stephen Pearl Andrews: Including the Final Replies of Mr. Andrews, Rejected by the "Tribune"* (New York, 1853).

Modern Times: Conversation between a Resident and a Reporter," the contents of which are as follows: ¹

[The Resident speaks:] "We are not Fourierites. We do not believe in association. . . . We are not communists; we are not Mormons; we are not non-resistants. If a man steals my property or injures me, I will take care to make myself square with him. We are Protestants; we are liberals. We believe in the sovereignty of the individual. We protest against all laws which interfere with individual rights — hence we are Protestants. We believe in perfect liberty of will and action — hence we are liberals. We have no compacts with each other, save the compact of individual happiness; and we hold that every man and every woman has a perfect and inalienable right to do and perform . . . as he or she may choose, now and hereafter. But this liberty to act must only be exercised at the *entire* cost of the individuals so acting. They have no right to tax the community for the consequences of their deeds. . . .

"We are a new colony. We cannot produce all which we consume, and many of our members are forced to go out into the world to earn what people call money, so that we may purchase our groceries, etc. We are mostly mechanics — eastern men. There is not yet a sufficient home demand for our labor to give constant employment to all. When we increase in numerical strength, our tinsmiths and shoemakers and hatters and artisans of that grade will not only find work at home, but will manufacture goods for sale. That will bring us money. We shall establish a labor exchange, — services for services, — there will be a scale to fix the terms of the exchange. . . .

"Schools? Ah, we only have a sort of primary affair for small children. . . . Each parent pays his proportion. . . .

"Women? We let them do about as they please, and they generally please to do about right. . . . We give them plenty of amusement; we have social parties, music, dancing, and other sports. They are not all bloomers; they wear such dresses as suit the individual taste, provided they can get them. . . .

"Marriage? Well, folks ask no questions in regard to that among us. We, or at least some of us, do not believe in life-partnerships, when the parties cannot live happily. Every person here is supposed to know his or her own interests best. We don't interfere; there is no eavesdropping or prying behind the curtain. Those are good members of society who are industrious and mind their own business. . . ."

¹ Reproduced by Noyes, pp. 99-101. The date of the clipping is about 1853.

breath of a tropic for the varieties of plumage produced"; in fact, in their gaudy dress they seemed quite like a party of masqueraders. The most usual garb was that worn by stage-peasants, the variations being in color and length of skirt, which ranged through nearly every degree between the knee and the ankle. No long or trailing skirts were in sight, and only a few bloomers. Short skirts and plain white stockings predominated. Nearly all the women wore hats with wide brims.

On Sunday Conway attended a service during which the speaker declared that science was the spirit of the age, and that all but the ignorant had to be skeptics. "When true methods of thought," the speaker continued, "are adopted by all thinkers; when science is enthroned; when all the rays of intellect are freed from the obscurations of dogmas and timidities, the world will have a prospect of having a religion — a rich, ripe, sustaining fruit, with no worm of unbelief and mis-giving gnawing at its heart."

On Sunday afternoon the villagers gathered at the home of a lady for conversation, which was devoted almost entirely to questions dealing with the improvement of man and of society.

On Sunday also, Conway was shown through the printing house of the village, which printed advertisements, circulars, and various works written by residents, but no newspaper.

Finally, the visitor spent Sunday evening on the porch of a house, where a select company engaged in singing and conversation.

Conway closed his sympathetic account of his visit to Modern Times with these words: "In the morning, when I caught the first glimpse of the spires of New York . . . I wondered if all of them together symbolized as much true aspiration and purity in those who raised them and yesterday worshipped in them, as were animating that little town, of whose existence the vast city¹ roared on in utter unconsciousness."²

¹ The population of New York City in 1857 was 750,000.

² In his *Autobiography, Memories, and Experiences* (Boston, New York, and

lovers — assumed the prosaic yoke of matrimony, and in order to support their families sought more promising fields of operation; while still others, among them Henry Edger, becoming nurserymen, struggled on in the village they had helped to create.¹ Modern Times, neglected even by sight-seers, limped along until it sought to bury the past by changing its revolutionary name to the more colorless one of Brentwood.²

Before one judges Modern Times too harshly, one should bear in mind that its unsavory reputation was due mainly to irresponsible eccentrics who came there seeking license, and who knew or cared nothing about the principles which guided its founders.³ Moreover one should remember that Josiah Warren and most of his disciples did not think that their schemes would ever solve the social problem. In establishing Modern Times and other experimental villages, they merely sought to prove that communities in which justice and equity prevailed

¹ Josiah Warren remained in Modern Times until the winter of 1855, when he returned to Indiana and Ohio, the scenes of his first attempts at reform. Early in 1856 he went to Boston, and at the end of the same year took up his residence a second time at Modern Times. In 1860 he repaired again to Boston, where he lived until his death on April 24, 1874. He was the author of several works, notably of *Equitable Commerce* (1846), *Written Music Remodeled*, and *Invested with the Simplicity of an Exact Science* (1860), and *True Civilization an Immediate Necessity* (1863).

² Brentwood, a pleasant village of five hundred souls, still shows traces of its pioneer days: it is laid out in one-acre lots, and its streets and avenues intersect as in the days of yore. But in the names of the thoroughfares one would search in vain for any tribute to the memory of its early settlers, Josiah Warren, Stephen Pearl Andrews, and Henry Edger. And not a single historian of Long Island mentions Modern Times as the ancestor of Brentwood. However, Richard M. Bayles, in his *Long Island* (Babylon, New York, 1885), p. 9, remarks casually: "The settlement [Brentwood] was commenced about thirty years ago in the unbroken forest. The settlers were people of refinement and intelligence, mostly New Englanders." Could a son disown his father more brazenly?

³ After the newspapers had made known the fact that complete freedom was permitted at Modern Times, the inevitable happened. Queer persons of both sexes gathered there, to the dismay of the serious settlers. One man advocated a diet of air and water, another preached integral nudism, and a woman lived on beans and salt till she expired. The original followers of Warren, true to the doctrine that the individual should be sovereign, so long as it was at his own cost, allowed the bizarre intruders to follow their bent.

III

HENRY EDGER, THE AMERICAN APOSTLE OF POSITIVISM

Henry Edger was born on January 22, 1820, at Chelwood Gate, in the parish of Fletching, Sussex, England.¹ He studied law and became an unsuccessful attorney and solicitor in London. In 1843 he married Mellisent Hobson, aged twenty-seven, of Irthlingboro, Northamptonshire, who bore him five children. Reared a Protestant, he early renounced Christianity and sought compensation in socialism and communism and in the novels of George Sand. Discouraged with his prospects in England, he decided in 1850 to take his family to America and start life anew, not as an attorney, but as a member of the industrial classes, the only portion of society which seemed to him worthy of respect.²

He landed in New York City on April 10, 1851, and thirteen days later filed his declaration of intention to become a citizen of the United States. That he had always been favorably disposed towards America is shown by the letter he addressed to the London *Leader* on February 5, 1854.

I have . . . often uttered [he says] my feelings of exulting satisfaction with the immense social progress attained here, far exceeding the most sanguine hopes that animated me before I came to this truly fortunate land. No American boy ever feasted with more exultation and delight over the story of Bunker's Hill than did your corre-

¹ Henry Edger, *Auguste Comte and the Middle Ages* (Pressburg, Hungary, [1885]), p. 115. The information I give concerning Edger is taken from his own publications, his unpublished correspondence with Comte, the manuscript "Journal of Henry Edger at Modern Times," which runs from April 9, 1854, to November 21, 1869 (3 vols., folio, pp. 823), and from conversations held with Edger's son, M. Paul Edger, of Paris, the present possessor of the "Journal."

² In a letter to the London *Leader* (July 8, 1854, p. 631) dated Tinton Falls, New Jersey, February 5, 1854, Edger wrote: ". . . English proletarians, whom I shall ever regard as my fellow countrymen, heartily as I despise the dominant class of that enlightened and self-governed country."



Henry Edger, aged thirty-five, and in the decline of life.

thinks, are beyond the comprehension of ordinary minds. And on March 11, 1854, before Comte had time to reply to his first letter, he sent from *Modern Times* to the *Leader* another letter entitled "American Political Life Sketched by an English Resident,"¹ which is filled with positivist ideas. In this document, Edger attacks the democratic form of government. First of all, he says, democracy and corruption go hand in band, and if one needs a practical demonstration of this fact, one has merely to consider the United States. In the second place, democracy does not carry out the will of the people, except in the long run; and that result is obtained under every form of government. And finally, democracy is powerless in the most vital of modern questions—that is, in the labor question. Legal and political measures, Edger continues, cannot effect the amelioration of the condition of the working classes. To such men, positivism must come as the gospel of good tidings. Comte's theories, as the result of a scientific inquiry into human nature, proclaim the supremacy of the moral point of view. Socially, this is the foundation, the very essence of religion. The Religion of Humanity, if embraced by the masses, will acquire an influence which will greatly modify the exercise of that power which is universally inherent in wealth and which democracy cannot diminish.

So, then, Henry Edger, thanks to the influence of Auguste Comte, in a brief time changed his views concerning "the immense social progress attained in the United States" and also concerning *Modern Times* as "the solution of the social problem."² That his positivist convictions became firmer as the years passed will be seen in the correspondence which he carried on with Comte from February 16, 1854, to August 31, 1857,—a correspondence which continues his biography through the most critical period of his life.

¹ *Ibid.*, July 15, 1854, p. 664.

² See pp. 125 and 116, above.

authors are as much prohibited as by any Papal Index. . . . But the generous impulses underlying modern socialism first drew me out of the ruts of sectarianism, and while I long sought to connect the main elements of my Christianity with the promised fraternal reorganization which seemed so kindred, the profound hostility of all classes of religionists to this movement, and, indeed, to all radical reform, and still more the bad faith and sheer lying with which their opposition was disgraced, accelerated my theological emancipation, and at the same time greatly stimulated my disposition to accept the wildest doctrines of the anarchical schools, by attaching a moral stigma to all the fundamental notions of social order, which rested, so far as I then knew, upon the theological basis alone.

Arrived at this stage, I came across the writings of George Sand. The sympathy awakened in my bosom for the writer and for her doctrines was heightened greatly by my own unhappy domestic circumstances—rendered, however, all the more unhappy by this influence. For several years the goddess of my sincere and profound devotion was the authoress of *Valentine*, *Jacques*, and *Lélia*.¹

This was not without its influence in occasioning my expatriation, now nearly three years ago. I was brought up an attorney and solicitor in London, and for many unhappy years practised that profession; and I believe I may say, although I never succeeded in it, so far as making it remunerative, that my loss was generally regretted by those whose affairs had been entrusted in my hands. In 1850, however, I decided finally to abandon that profession and emigrate to America, in order that I might, with less pain to myself and family than would be possible in England, recommence the career of life, and that too in linking myself with the purely industrial classes, the only portion of modern society that seemed to me not wholly absorbed in a boundless mercenary selfishness.

The utopian schemes of social reorganization rife in this day had

¹ Aurore Dupin, known as George Sand, married Casimir Dudevant, an uncouth, domineering boor, on September 10, 1822, and broke with him in 1831. Her novels *Valentine* (1832), *Lélia* (1833), and *Jacques* (1834) reflect the grief and pride of the neglected wife. The theme of *Valentine* is the unhappy marriage imposed by worldly considerations; *Lélia* and *Jacques* deal with the rights of woman and the depravity of man. Concerning *Lélia*, George Sand wrote: "Je crois que j'ai blasphémé la nature et Dieu peut-être dans *Lélia*; Dieu, qui n'est pas méchant. . . ."

It is interesting to note that Henry Edger's oldest daughter, born in 1848, was named Lélia.

reorganization or accept your moral doctrines, so diametrically opposed to the anarchical schemes to which I had long stood pledged.¹

But, for six months past I have accepted positivism complete and entire, with all its consequences, as the sole possible religion of the future, and at the same time the only permanent solution of the social problem.²

In making this communication to you, I am fully conscious that you will not have to congratulate yourself on an accession of any intrinsic importance; still, it cannot be indifferent to you to find that the most anarchical doctrines do, even at this early stage of the history of the New Church, have to give way before the combined force of a real intellectual demonstration and a lofty morality.

But, to tell the truth, it was the sublime utterance, "Il est indigne des grands cœurs de répandre le trouble qu'ils ressentent,"³ that quelled the last vestige of eight years of anarchy in my soul. It was to the new Sainte Clotilde and the two memories that accompany hers in your own private worship,⁴ reverend Sir, that the long ruined private altar was at last re-erected; inseparably blended now with memories more nearly allied to ourselves, it is my incessant aim to extend the sacred protection over my family. . . .

You will forgive my not writing in the French language. Although I read it with perfect ease, I could not trust myself to utter my thoughts in it on this occasion.

I am at present able to contribute only the small sum of ten francs

¹Émile Littré wrote as follows concerning his first contact with the positive philosophy: "Quand la philosophie positive m'apparut [en 1840], je n'avais point de philosophie, j'avais renoncé depuis longtemps à toute théologie, et, depuis quelque temps, à toute métaphysique. Je me résignais, non sans un vif regret, à cet état négatif. L'ouvrage de M. Comte me transforma. La première lecture vint se heurter violemment contre ce que je nomme maintenant mes préjugés. Mais enfin le livre triompha; et, de cette lecture longuement méditée, je sortis disciple" (*Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive* [2d ed., Paris, 1864], p. 662).

²In the preface to his *The Positivist Calendar* (1856), Edger speaks of "the [positive] doctrines which have infused peace into [my] soul, given an aim and a direction to [my] life, substituted radiant and solid hopes for the blank despair in which the groveling materialism and gloomy skepticism, now really prevalent, naturally result."

³This maxim occurs in the seventh letter of *Lucie*, an epistolary *nouvelle* by Clotilde de Vaux, which first appeared in the *National*, June 20 and 21, 1845.

⁴That is, Comte's three guardian angels. Clotilde de Vaux, his mother, Rosalie Boyer, and his adopted daughter, his faithful servant, Sophie Blot.

improvement, instead of expecting it to come from an external and chimerical intervention. I thank you for the ten francs you contributed to the sacerdotal subsidy. Although the sum is small, I am sure that you will, as you say, do better in the future.

EDGER TO COMTE

Edger replied to Comte's letter with a description of the anarchical village in which he was striving to establish positivism.

*Modern Times, Thompson, Long Island, N. Y.,
Matridi,¹ 6th Dante 66 [July 21, 1854.]*

Most reverend Sir:

I find this day the first opportunity, now long sought, of replying to your highly prized note of 19th Aristotle last.

In answer to your question as to my age, I beg respectfully to state that I was born 22nd Moses 32; and am, therefore, now thirty-four years old.

The opportunity which may be enjoyed in this country of openly practising the worship of Humanity, and to which you refer in your note, is the one thing I most prize here. I perceive quite plainly, I think, how the most important element in our social regeneration, the indispensable precursor of all the rest, is this very worship; how the Church is the center of the social organism.

It is true that the anarchical sects of Protestantism are full of bigotry and intolerance; that a crushing social persecution would await the man who in general American society should openly attempt the institution of this worship. That is why this little village where I live has, notwithstanding its pre-eminent anarchy, a powerful attraction for me. Here I meet at least with the widest tolerance. And, more still, I find around me already a number of earnest in-

¹The following table of the days of the week was devised, with Comte's approval, by "a young positivist," in order to "attach the ancient institution of the week to the cult of Humanity" (*Catéchisme positiviste*, p. 215):

Lundi	Le Mariage	Matridi
Mardi	La Paternité	Patrjdi
Mercredi	La Filiation	Filidi
Jeudi	La Fraternité	Fratridi
Vendredi	La Domesticité	Domidi
Samedi	La Femme, ou l'Amour	Matridi
Dimanche	L'Humanité	Humanidi

Around a series of so-called principles, collectively known as Equity, or Equitable Commerce, the most ultra of the anarchical doctrines thus floating about in general society have rallied, and constitute the basis of the attempt at social reorganization of which this village is thus far the principal practical result. But these principles, as they are called, although the very intensification of anarchy in their first appearance, seem to admit of quite organic transformations. At all events, I have been surprised at the readiness displayed for the reception of positivism, especially in its moral doctrines and its ensemble, by those who have been the longest residents here.

Although connected with this place from the time of my first arrival in this country three years ago, at which time it was just being founded, and having invested what little money I possessed here, I have been an actual resident with my family only since this spring. I certainly did not anticipate so great a readiness as I have since found in listening to a pure and lofty morality, especially after my own experience; for it took some time for positivism to dislodge all the Fourierism from my own brain.

I must, I suppose, trouble you here with a brief account of these so-called principles of Equity. They are first and foremost: "the Sovereignty of the Individual, *exercised at his own cost.*" Before the attacks of this fundamental principle of ours have already fallen in our mind all the illusions of democratic republicanism; government by majorities, election of superiors by inferiors, and all the metaphysical apparatus of parliamentaryism are utterly exploded at Modern Times without the aid of organic conceptions. This limitation — "*exercised at his own cost*" — is generally so interpreted here as at least to pave the way for, if not to be nearly identical with, the letting in of the social point of view in the estimate of every action, while amounting to a protest against the interference of the temporal power in the domain of the spiritual. Connected with this limitation is a second principle: "Cost the limit of price, a scientific measure of honesty in trade." This seems to me still more organic in tendency, as claiming a direct intervention of moral considerations in all industrial and commercial relations. For, combined with this principle, there exists a plan for the formation of a currency based wholly on labor, — a labor note, — the operation of which, while as yet almost wholly ideal, has familiarized the notion of all the superior industrial functions being fundamentally social, to be exercised for the social good. While, combined with the notion of Individual Sovereignty and the third principle: "Individualization of persons and things," it has utterly dissipated here the illusions yet

entertained by a little handful of people in an obscure country village were it not for the double reason that these so-called principles are silently but surely working their way through a large and influential portion of American society, and that, on the other hand, I see reason to hope confidently for success in the work to which I have dared to consecrate my life — the establishment here of a permanent center of positivist propaganda. Now, the silent progress of these principles of Equitable Commerce is such that, after swallowing up nearly all the varied forms of socialism long prevalent in this country, they are making inroads on all other reform isms, — abolitionism (antislavery), spiritualism, etc., — threatening to become a widely ramified movement, and to make of this little village the center of a wide and densely populated district. The writings of the sect are now being translated into German for publication in New York, and also, I believe, into French by a Parisian in your metropolis. Their relationship with the speculations of P. J. Proudhon¹ will render them very appreciable to the metaphysical ringleaders of European anarchy, while their greater intelligibility and practicality will render them accessible to a much wider circle of readers.

At the same time, it is daily more and more evident to me that here, where the direct attempt to reduce these principles to practice immediately confronts them with dire realities, they will prove eminently transitional in the case of all minds capable, in any manner whatsoever, of making progress. So that I cannot help cherishing hopes that I may live to see a true positivist Church founded here. . . .

I have long been anxious to obtain M. Lonchampt's formulæ of *Prières positivistes*,² but M. Baillière's agent in New York tells me the little book containing them is out of print. I greatly need some guide in directing my own domestic positivist teachings. Happily, the positivist Faith has at last produced a sympathy and harmony between myself and my wife, which for the eight long, dreary years of my metaphysical abetraction were wholly wanting.

I have ventured to think that, at least here, where metaphysical revolt and anti-historic sentiment are more to be feared than any

¹Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), the founder of a school of individualistic, or philosophic, anarchy, held that the revolution for the betterment of mankind must come, not from above, through the government, but from below, through the individual.

²*Essai sur la prière*, by Joseph Lonchampt, Lyons, 1851, pp. 24; 2d ed., Paris, 1853. Lonchampt, one of Comte's most faithful disciples, was the author also of a *Précis de la vie et des écrits d'Auguste Comte*, Paris, 1889.

and therefore you must count especially on the help of women. I am touched by the part positivism played in re-establishing harmony between you and your wife. You seem to me suited to your mission of regenerating your neighbors. You may become a priest of Humanity if you are willing to submit to the encyclopedic, and particularly the mathematical, training indispensable to the priesthood of our religion.¹ However, do not allow your future labors to divert you from your calling as nurseryman. Positivists must show by their conduct that their Faith, far from turning them from their civic duties, causes them to fulfill them better. The end of your letter indicates that you feel the importance of esthetic cultivation.

What you say concerning the Catholic Mass convinces me that you are freed from your former irreligious or metaphysical prejudices. But it is not by the Mass that Catholicism can prepare one for the positive adoration. The transition can be accomplished better through the worship of the Virgin Mary. I think that you might institute, in the Italian language, and with appropriate music, a true positivist service in honor of the Virgin, which would be very useful in preparing the final cult.²

¹ The positive priests were to be, as some of Comte's American critics pointed out, very powerful. They were to preach, conduct public worship, administer the sacraments, give counsel to the faithful, teach science, act as arbiters in industrial and international conflicts, and turn public opinion into channels which would best serve mankind. They were to be a body of scholars, physicians, poets, artists, and even dancers and singers.

The training of the priests was to be long and strenuous. From the age of twenty-eight to thirty-five, the candidate was to study under the older members of the faculties of the positivist schools, and from thirty-five to forty-two, he was to serve as vicar and pass through an apprenticeship of teaching and giving advice. At the age of forty-two he was to be admitted to the priesthood. Priests were to receive no salary and to hold no political office. They were to be obliged to marry in order that they might come under the salutary influence of woman.

At the head of the universal priesthood was to be the High Priest of Humanity, who was to reside in Paris, the Holy City of positivism. This supreme pontiff was to have the power to ordain, transfer, suspend, or dismiss priests.

For the information given in this note, as well as for explanations of other elements of Comte's religion and polity, I reproduce, with some changes, the views of John K. Ingram, *Practical Morals: A Treatise on Universal Education* (London, 1904), and in a few cases those of John Edwin McGee, *A Crusade for Humanity—The History of Organized Positivism in England* (London, 1931).

² Comte hoped that the worship of the Virgin Mary might lead to the worship of Humanity.

He regarded the Catholic Church, in its constitution and thought, as the

and to find themselves with inclinations strongly drawing them towards spiritual functions, yet without a sufficient competency for the priesthood. Indeed, I imagined myself one of a special and exceptional class intermediate between the complete priesthood and the contemplative proletariat. To meet the wants of such, I ventured to cherish an ambition to lay the first foundation of an institution forming perhaps the homologue under positivism of the monasteries under Catholicism. What was needed seemed to me to be a condition of material independence, so far as the temporal power was concerned, secured by industry under the direction of a superior belonging to one's own order, and a function, at least in part spiritual, as, for example, in the preaching and propagation of our Faith, just such as in fact I have had to exercise here.

I had no sooner conceived the idea than a multitude of considerations rushed into my mind, tending to make the project appear more feasible and more useful. The material economies derivable from associative life (which I had seen actually realized at the North-American Phalanx,¹ but which, however, then appeared to me greater than they really are) might surely, when consecrated to the service of our Faith, be turned to excellent account. Then, an asylum would thus be provided from the persecutions certain to await my fellow believers; and the same might even be extended, under proper conditions, to the victims of the contemporary moral disorganization, whether women or proletaries. And especially I had in view the furtherance of a project long cherished for aiding in certain systematic emigrations, by which I believed the just reclamations of the proletaries in particular localities might be powerfully supported. Again, the printing of certain books, greatly needed by religious positivists, but not of such a character as to induce ordinary tradesmen to publish them, might be made by such an association, with its industrial and other economies, even a source of income as well as a means of propagande. . . .

The next point on which I have to communicate is my own propagande, direct and indirect. In regard to the direct, after reading the first part of Mr. Lewes's last book, *Philosophy of the Sciences*,² at a series of Monday morning meetings, and portions of the *Catéchisme* (translated) to a more select audience on Sunday afternoons, during

¹ See p. 130, n. 2, above.

² Comte's *Philosophy of the Sciences: Being an Exposition of the Principles of the "Cours de philosophie positive" of Auguste Comte* (London, 1853). For Comte's criticism of this work, see p. 10, above.

by every individual: these are the possibilities of Equitable Commerce, the final positive transformation of the great universal individualist movement, the ultimate result of republican democracy. . . ."

I ought to say that there are very few families settled here as yet.¹ But there is a little band of men and women fully bent on realizing on this spot a better state of society than is to be met with elsewhere. Of this little band perhaps not more than half are living here now. Among these latter are some two or three earnest students of positivism.

There is a still greater number more or less interested in it. Indeed, almost every man here having any practical talent rallies to the efforts I have thus openly commenced for introducing among us a true hierarchical order. Anarchical notions, indeed, have already lost their hold upon our best men here. They retain their sway only over our friends and supporters outside, and (I grieve to say it) over our women. A strange fanaticism, known as spiritualism, and making an astounding progress throughout this strange country, obtaining support from a large number of the best-educated classes, including individuals of considerable eminence, even intellectual, and which, of course, directly favors absolute individualism, exercises over some of our best women here a veritable fascination.² It will be my duty shortly to lay the whole matter before Your Reverence. . . .³

In regard to my indirect propaganda: the principal effort I am able to make is in the musical art.⁴ I should succeed also in causing some dramatic attempts to be made but for the fatally desultory habits of the young of both sexes here, as well as in this country generally. The same cause greatly injures the effect of my musical instructions. I have succeeded, however, in organizing a small party, principally of ladies, for the practice of the old English madrigals and other choral music of the highest class. Occasionally we sing portions of Mozart's easiest Mass.

While the dramatic attempt is not wholly abandoned, I am hoping for more immediate success in a class to be formed shortly for read-

¹ According to Edger's "Journal," the first family arrived in Modern Times on May 6, 1851.

² Concerning spiritualism, see p. 105, above.

³ Inasmuch as the exaltation of woman, due mainly to the influence of Clotilde de Vaux, is one of the chief principles of positivism, it must have been a severe blow to Comte to learn that the women of Modern Times were unresponsive to Edger's instruction.

⁴ See p. 133, n. 2, above.

with the temporal order, it would be a satisfaction to enjoy some intercourse with one in that order. To one with whom I could feel nearer on an equality I would venture to write in French. May I ask if M. Lonchampt is wholly or chiefly in the temporal order? Might I address a few lines to him? ¹

With profound gratitude and sincere reverence,
Your faithful and devoted disciple

HENRY EDGER.

To M. Comte,
High Priest of Humanity.

COMTE TO EDGER

20 Frederick 66 (November 24, 1854).

In your recent letter there are certain things which I cannot approve. For instance, your project of a sort of positivist monastery is contrary to the domestic affections, which in our religion are the necessary basis of social life. We do not want havens for persecuted positivists; they must remain at their posts in Humanity.

You attach too much importance to your abnormal surroundings at Modern Times. Even in the best environment, positivism can hope to convert only one one-thousandth of the present generation, but that fraction will govern the rest. Conversions will be rare in your anarchical village. You should devote your attention above all to conservatives, who are everywhere, and especially in the United States, the most likely converts to positivism.

In particular, try to convert women by making them feel the moral resources and the social guarantees that our religion offers them. My *Catéchisme positiviste* ought to appeal to American women, who must be disgusted with the dryness of Protestantism.

I am deeply grateful to you for your propaganda. I hope to see you become the head of an American positivist center. I fear, however, that your age and the trammels of your calling will oblige you to give up the idea of becoming a priest. Your lack of scientific knowledge would make you unfit to withstand the attacks of scientists on positivism. But, for such men as you, — devoted, zealous, talented men, — I can create the apostolate. To tell the truth, there is not in the entire world a single priest of Humanity except me, in spite of worthy apprenticeships, none of which is yet completed.

¹ Since the positive regeneration was to be a universal movement, Comte did everything possible to promote close relations among his followers

I had already begun to feel indistinctly, especially from the invaluable teachings of the last volume of the *Politique Positive*, that I was lending too much weight to the abnormal social medium around me here. But the instruction of Your Reverence in this regard finally reassured me, and rendered my course not only the more clear, but so much the more cheering.

And yet I have met with a success here far transcending my most sanguine hopes. Of one disciple, who now for some time has assiduously practised our personal worship, and strenuously sought to extend his religious regeneration to all his family (a brother and their sisters, all unmarried), I cannot suffer myself to have any doubts. But his experience is, unfortunately, too much like that of all of us here in one very important respect. The normal state of things is here absolutely reversed. Instead of finding in women an assistance, they constitute our principal obstacle. My experience in this respect is uniform. All the young men of any intelligence become more or less interested in positivism. The women, on the contrary, without exception, are either indifferent or hostile. The majority of the women around me more or less openly sustain anti-domestic doctrines, many of them adhering to certain principles they call free love, claiming that astounding *right of inconstancy* which elsewhere has hitherto sullied my sex alone. The rest seem absorbed in personal anxieties and concern for merely material well-being, to which they would fain limit the aims and efforts of the male members of their families.

But in this respect, as in so many others, Modern Times is but too faithful a reflex of the current of opinion in this strange country generally. That amazing fanaticism of which I have before spoken, and which they call spiritualism, takes under its fostering care every phase of the modern anarchy. It is one chief support of the free love agitation, daily growing as this is in intensity and extent. The shortest way of fully acquainting Your Reverence with this phenomenon may be to send one or two copies of some of the journals devoted to it. Your Reverence may then see, from the advertisements alone, commonly the most instructive portion of our detestable periodical press,¹ the vast extent of literature, such as it is, devoted to this subject. Commencing only some two or three years ago, this spiritualism, absurd and immoral as it is, has been propagated with such rapidity as to count now, according to the statistics of its adherents, some two millions of devotees.

¹ In his attitude towards the press, as towards many other phases of contemporary life, Edgar merely reflects the views of Comte.

of the year. The amelioration directed by Your Reverence will be effected in the copies made by my fellow disciples for their own use, commencing with one now being made by my wife.

A translation of Lonchamp's *Essai* and prayers is also in circulation. It is, indeed, invaluable. . . .

The ensemble of the instructions of Your Reverence leaves no doubt on my mind that my duty is to remain here, where I find myself. Yet I ought frankly to inform Your Reverence more exactly as to my material position. The small patrimony which ultimately fell to me was long before settled by my own wish upon my wife and children, beyond my control, in pursuance of the metaphysical notions I entertained, even then, twelve years ago, at the time of my marriage, as to the material independence of woman. This settlement was not desired either by my wife or her family. Her father, who is still living, was a noble-hearted English farmer, and was anxious only for the spiritual well-being of his daughter.¹ He, indeed, disapproved of such a settlement. I succeeded, unfortunately, but too well in demoralizing my wife herself during my metaphysical phase. But at this moment the small income derived from this patrimony comes into my hands, and constitutes at once my sole resource for the immediate support of my family and the only fund whence I can obtain capital for my business, which as yet produces nothing and costs much. (It takes two or three years to grow trees in the nursery fit for sale; and I began only last spring). Moreover this income does not arrive regularly. If it did, it would amount to about a thousand francs a year,² perhaps a little more. But in my business, when fairly established, I could earn, employing my own labor alone, from two to five thousand francs, according to circumstances.

It seems to me that in my situation the first effort at a more public propagandism will be the publication of a tract which I have by me in manuscript on this Equitable Commerce to which I myself and my disciples stand generally committed by the mere fact of our residence here. In this manuscript I represent this Modern Times movement, with its Equitable Commerce principles, as merely a form—the most successful on the whole—of practically propounding the great social question, which, however, has to find its solution elsewhere. I then point out in regard to that one question most apt to interest the American mind, that of *the true reward of labor*, the general outline of the positive solution, viz., *the permanence of*

¹ Concerning Edger's wife, see p. 125, above

² Roughly, two hundred dollars.

have told you before, it is destined especially for conservatives. It is only natural that the women around you should resist your efforts. However, when they become weary of their aberrations, even the most impure will see the light, provided they remain tender enough to feel the affective aptitude of our doctrine.

Spiritualism, the natural product of dissolvent Protestantism, proves that all theologisms must be eliminated.

I was pleased to learn that you have translated my *Catéchisme*. The fact that your wife helped you in the task seems to indicate that she is favorably disposed towards our Faith. If you can convert her, domestic harmony and a sane education of your daughter will be your reward.

Your tract, now in manuscript, will adapt positivism to the peculiar milieu in which you are living. You should add to it, however, two points, namely: our dogma of the gratuity of work, which characterizes altruistic industry and founds the positive theory of salary;¹ and our rule, "l'homme doit nourrir la femme," which is the principal basis in the determination of salaries and the essential motive in their partial stability.

The sacrament of presentation should be administered, if possible, during the first year, or at least before weaning. As to names, you will find a supplementary list in the fourth volume of the *Système de politique positive*. The godfather and the godmother of your child must be true believers in our religion. Still, in this transitional period, you may require only an acceptance of our fundamental dogma of Humanity, of the law of eternal widowhood, and of the doctrine of the separation of the temporal and the spiritual powers.²

¹ According to Comte, all labor is gratuitous. The true reward of work lies, not in pecuniary remuneration, but in the satisfaction which results from it, and in the gratitude and esteem which follow it. The real office of wages is not to pay the value of the work done, but to make it possible for the worker to accomplish properly his social function by supplying him with tools, provisions, and other things necessary for his personal maintenance and for the rearing of his family for future service to Humanity. Labor is a service which both employer and employed owe to the Great Being; in other words, in the positivist view, labor is no longer a private affair between workman and employer, but a common undertaking for the good of all men.

² During the positivist era, the temporal and the spiritual powers will be coexisting and parallel, but separate and independent. The spiritual power will be, of course, in the hands of the priesthood. Inasmuch as industry is becoming more and more the occupation of the citizens of the Occident, the temporal power, or civil government, will be vested in the leaders of industry, or the patriciate. Industry will be chiefly threefold: agriculture, manufactures, and commerce. From these three arises a fourth, banking, which, because it deals

and the Ideologues who had appealed so strongly to Thomas Jefferson and other gentlemen during the early years of the Republic.¹ The religious revival of the first half of the century, which in Europe was official and formal, assumed a rabid, crusading aspect in the scores of American sects.² A lonely figure, indeed, among the throngs of Christian theologians and metaphysicians was Thomas Cooper, M.D., president of South Carolina College, and professor of chemistry in that institution, who, in 1831, to his translation of F.-J.-V. Broussais's *De l'Irritation et de la folie* appended two tracts, *The Scripture Doctrine of Materialism* ("to prove that Christ and his Apostles were materialists") and *A View of the Metaphysical and Psychological Arguments in Favor of Materialism*.³ Jean-Jacques Ampère, who, during his sojourn in the United States in 1851-1852, looked in vain for attacks on orthodox religion, wrote as follows:

On ne pourrait guère citer que cette pauvre Fanny Wright, qui allait à travers les États de l'Union, prêchant avec l'athéisme l'abolition de l'esclavage, et dont on disait que sa profession de foi était celle-ci: Il n'y a point de Dieu, et Fanny Wright est son prophète. L'irréligion n'existe pas dans ce pays, ou du moins y est tout à fait dans l'ombre. Parmi l'innombrable quantité de journaux de

¹ For a discussion of liberal thought in the United States before 1830, see Woodbridge Riley, "Early Free-Thinking Societies in America," in the *Harvard Theological Review*, July, 1918, pp. 247-284.

² A specimen of the bigotry and ferocity of the eighteen fifties may be found in the first eleven volumes of the Protestant periodical *American and Foreign Christian Union* (New York City), on the title-page of which one reads: "The love of Christ constraineth us."

³ Cooper did not mince words. In the preface to his translation of Broussais, he says: "The value of free discussion is not yet appreciated as it ought to be in these United States; and the powerful enmity of the clergy and their ignorant adherents is sure to pursue every man who exercises the right of discussing clerical doctrines and clerical claims. But I think the indications are manifest that their day is gradually drawing to its close. For the peace and happiness of mankind I sincerely hope it is so." And in the preface to Appendix C of the same work, after criticizing the clergy for its "mischievous interference" in astronomy, geology, zoölogy, physiology, and medicine, he adds: "Bigotry is a continual spy upon science, and restrains that perfect freedom of discussion which the cause of truth and the good of the public absolutely require upon every contested question."

chosen and recognized spiritual director, the religious experience of my soul? Is not the office of confession one of vast spiritual import, and adapted to eternal endurance?

It has occupied me the whole period of my renewed religious life, since positivism first restored to me this long-lost bliss, to construct my principal prayer, my daily prayer, and that too only the portion devoted to commemoration.¹ This I have wrought upon until, following up the suggestion in the last volume of the *Positive Polity* as to the facility of the acquisition of the art of rhythm, it has acquired the form of verse, containing some 350 lines.² I find that this commemoration of the Maternal Angel (still objective, and yet, as being

¹Comte believed that the greatest problem of human life, both public and private, is how to bring about the subordination of egoism to altruism; in other words, how to cause the social feeling to prevail over self-love, in order that man's activity may become more and more social in its nature. Positivism, Comte maintained, is a religion which will gradually effect the triumph of the social affections, and therefore love for Humanity is its fundamental principle. Accordingly the positivist worship is merely the practice by which positivists acknowledge their gratitude and devotion to Humanity, and resolve to become her worthy servants.

The core of the positivist worship is prayer, but not the selfish prayer and vain compliments of Christians, which are generally a petition for personal favors. Positivist prayer is either an outpouring of love and gratitude towards Humanity or her worthy representatives, or an expression of an aspiration of a social character. Comte, with his usual precision, tells how the daily prayer should be composed and how long it should last. Kneeling before his domestic altar, on which there are representations of Humanity (under the form of Clotilde de Vaux), of the three guardian angels, and of a patron (taken from the great men of the positivist calendar), the positivist prays for one hour. The prayer is composed of a commemoration, or meditation, lasting forty minutes, and an effusion — that is, an outburst of love, a mystic embrace, twenty minutes in length. Comte also required a prayer of twenty minutes at noon and one of thirty minutes at night.

The positivist private worship is divided into two parts, the personal and the domestic. The personal worship consists in the daily adoration of the best representatives of Humanity; and as the entire existence of Humanity is founded on love, women, the affective sex, are naturally its most perfect representatives. Therefore men will adore their mothers, wives, and daughters, who will develop in them, respectively, veneration, attachment, and goodness. To this common adoration, women will add husbands and sons. For domestic worship, see p. 154, n. 3, below.

²Since poetry is the most general and the least technical of the arts, it forms the basis of Comte's esthetic hierarchy. Poetry, of which sentiment is the chief domain, is especially suited to moral improvement (*Système de pol. pos.*, I, 283, 292). The fifth chapter of the second part of Christian Cherfils's book, *L'Esthétique Positiviste* (Paris, 1909), is entitled "Rôle supérieur de la poésie."

our sacred propagande. But especially do I consider the influence this must have upon the imagination of my children, even upon my wife herself, who continues to pay every deference and respect to our Faith, without being actively sympathetic towards it.

But it is in my own family that an opportunity has now occurred, if some serious obstacles can be removed, for celebrating our sacrament of presentation.¹ On Herophilus Tuesday,² 2nd Archimedes last [March 27], was born our fifth child, a daughter; four only being still living. Nine years ago we lost one in its first year, whereupon I had nearly resolved to have no more, conscientiously objecting to bringing children into the world incapable of robust health.

My wife is quite willing that the sacrament should take place, and that our dear little girl should be solemnly consecrated to the service of Humanity. The only difficulty of any magnitude is in regard to godfather and godmother. As to the first office, I do not, however, anticipate any obstacle, for the one disciple whom I have already mentioned, and of whom I feel it my duty to communicate many particulars to Your Reverence, will, I think, be deemed very fully eligible.

This young man, by name John Metcalf, is about my own age, but not married; and has for a considerable period exhibited many very estimable qualities. He has a brother several years older than himself, and two sisters older than either, all of whom have lived together in this place since its first commencement some four years ago. During my translation of the *Catéchisme* last year, each chapter, as fast as it was written, was transmitted to this family, and after the first few chapters, it was John Metcalf who became most deeply interested in our Religion, which seemed to beam upon him in its plenitude from his first perusal of the chapter on the "Human Order."³ As soon as he came to the worship, he began to institute its practice, which ever since he has assiduously followed up.

His brother William, who has long been practically the head of the family, was the first to be attracted towards the philosophy

¹The sacrament of presentation celebrates the advent of the new scion of Humanity. The infant is presented to the priest by the parents, who promise that he shall be reared in such a manner as to prepare him to be a worthy servant of the Supreme Being. A godfather and a godmother pledge themselves, in case of need, to take the place of the parents in the physical, intellectual, and moral supervision of the child.

²Herophilus, a Greek surgeon and anatomist, flourished about 300 B.C.

³In Comte's *Catéchisme positiviste*, the fourth *entretien* is entitled "Ordre humain, d'abord social, puis moral."

sisting between them is otherwise than strictly chaste. But it is abundantly manifest that the principal influence which she exerts over him is directed rather to the stimulation of his efforts at material aggrandizement than to the development of noble sentiments in his heart.

It is the more prize the sincere devotedness displayed by the younger brother in that it has been able to surmount the ensemble of influences so unfavorable. John Metcalf soon felt, as he expressed it, that "in that house he was not on consecrated ground." Although surrounded there with every material comfort, his time at his own disposal, his work (being by trade a carpenter) merely, or at least principally, to render an already comfortable house more and more commodious,¹ he soon perceived that positivist prayer must ever lead to action. He went to New York City, resolved to show what a religious positivist proletary was; obtained employment, and has since, now some four months, so conducted himself as to command the esteem and confidence of his employer, the respect and admiration of all who know him.

During our separation we have maintained an uninterrupted epistolary correspondence. In one of his letters he says: "I attended the French Catholic Church to-day and last Sunday." (He was, like myself, brought up a Protestant sectary). "The holy joys and firm resolves awakened in me there will not, I hope, be without effect. The intense pleasure my heart felt at hearing the French language spoken, and in being surrounded by natives of the center of the Occident, was almost intoxicating." In another: "I purchased a copy of the English edition of the *Imitation* the day after I last wrote to you, the contents of which I devoured as a man who had been famishing for some years. I soon determined to make it my constant companion, and read a portion every day."² I have met with a beautiful engraving of the *Virgin Mother*, the contemplation of which calls up the most sublime and holy thoughts, inspiring a profound veneration for the Mother of Humanity.³ I look forward with great pleasure to the time when we shall mutually partake in

¹ For a sketch of Mrs Haywood's house, see the illustration facing p. 116, above.

² Comte recommended the daily reading of the *Imitation of Christ* as a manual of sanctity and devotion, with the understanding that in reading it the positivist would substitute Humanity for God, the social type for the personal type of Jesus, our inner improvement for future reward, our social instincts for grace, and our egoistic instincts for nature.

³ The Mother of Humanity and Sainte Clotilde, below, are Clotilde de Vaux.

already regard the three objects of the personal adoration of Your Reverence,¹ notwithstanding the continued objective existence of one of them, as henceforth included in our positivist beatification? In that case, it is Sophie Bliot whom I would especially desire to present to my daughters as the chosen type for their emulation, if it were only as a perpetual homage to the proletary condition. *That condition becomes growingly more attractive to me, as the most adapted to a truly spiritual life.* But, moreover, how much of our cause depends on awakening on its behalf an active feminine sympathy!

My friend John Metcalf and myself alike worship devoutly the adorable Saint whose name is eternally linked with that of our revered Pontiff. But our very reverence would cause us to shrink from making it too familiar. I should then judge the second name to be that of special honor, and should deem the most proper combination of these two most sweet Saints in the name of our infant to be: Sophia Clotilda.

I know not whether I did rightly, but, deeming that some time must necessarily elapse ere our sacrament could possibly be performed, and unwilling that the birth of our child should long remain unconnected with the worship and practices of our Faith, I directed that our infant should be called provisionally by the day on which she was born, only giving it a feminine termination; so that for the present we call her Herophila. . . .

With profound veneration and gratitude, humbly saluting Your Reverence,

His devoted disciple
HENRY EDGER.

COMTE TO EDGER

11 Dante 67 (July 26, 1855).

I enclose a note authorizing you to act as my substitute in the ceremony of presentation. Around the middle of your right arm you must wear the green ribbon which characterizes the sacerdotal function.

I am touched by your choice of names for your child, and Sophie is delighted.

Mrs. Hayward, the godmother whom you mention, is acceptable to me; and your choice of John Metcalf as godfather is ideal.² The

¹ That is, Comte's three guardian angels. See p. 131, n. 4, above.

² In the seventh annual circular to the subscribers to the sacerdotal fund

John Metcalf, during which he gazed for the first time on a reproduction of Étex's picture of Comte and his three guardian angels; Mrs. Hayward's opposition to positivism; the death of Eleanor Maria Blacker, a prospective positivist of Modern Times; the publication of a tract from his own pen; and minor matters.

Modern Times,

7 Descartes 67 [October 14, 1855.]

Very reverend and dear Father:

The last pontifical epistle I had the honor of receiving, dated 11th Dante, came to hand 8th Gutenberg last. . . .

I am led now to state that during the past year I have been re-reading the *Politique Positive* by short passages every morning. Arrived at last at the fourth volume, I was lately led to compose some fetishist prayers for use in domestic worship, in view of our expected institution of a family oratory. These prayers are addressed to the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, and the Sun; astro-latrical prayers for every day in the week. But of course, before using them I wait for the commands of Your Reverence. The general principle of them is an invocation to the celestial order to awaken and develop the sentiment of immutable law, and the corresponding resignation and submission to rule.

The *Imitation* has proved one of the most valuable aids to my own religious culture. My dear friend John Metcalf presented us with a copy in English soon after he went to the city of New York, and subsequently sent me one of the original, which almost from that moment became my most precious treasure. I have attempted also to follow the parallel reading of the *Divina Commedia*, according to the suggestion of Your Reverence,¹ but in this I am not equally successful, partly from want of familiarity with the language, but more perhaps from the vicious personal habits not yet eradicated by

¹ Comte read every day a canto of Dante's "incomparable epic" and a chapter of the *Imitation of Christ*. Of these two works he wrote (*Système de pol. pos.*, IV [1854], 405): "Plus de sept ans se sont écoulés depuis que je lis chaque matin un chapitre de l'un et chaque soir un chant de l'autre, sans que je cesse d'y trouver des charmes auparavant inaperçus, et d'en retirer de nouveaux fruits, intellectuels ou moraux. . . Jusqu'à ce que le positivisme accomplisse, en invoquant l'Humanité, la synthèse morale et poétique ébauchée par le catholicisme au nom de Dieu, le mystique résumé du moyen âge nous servira de guide journalier pour étudier et perfectionner notre nature."

we already feel that such a situation is only provisional, depending chiefly on the continued objectivity of him with whom her form will eternally be blended, when both together shall take possession of their eternal throne. While our sweet Sophie,—for those gentle childlike traits can belong to no other,—with all-unconscious simplicity, directs her intent gaze upon that most reverend Father, on whose lips she is breathlessly hanging. . . .¹

I am very fully satisfied that the incessant efforts of my dear Brother Metcalf on behalf of our cause will not be without result. But I have to blame myself for my own poor success. I can see my own great deficiencies reflected in the spiritual condition of my dear wife. I have never justly appreciated her. I used to imagine her wanting in sympathy because she could not follow me through all my metaphysical aberrations. But, in fact, she is endowed with very admirable qualities, and will become a real and great aid to me when I become at all worthy of my vast mission, vast especially in view of my miserable failings.

I reproach myself with much of the ill success attending my efforts at the conversion of Mr. Metcalf's family. . . . Be this as it may, Mrs. Hayward not only declines the sponsorship of our child, but is using every means to divert Mr. J. Metcalf from his devotion to our cause. He does but smile at such efforts, and rather rejoices than otherwise at this lady's rejection of an office for which he always felt she was quite unfit morally. . . .

I feel, however, deep disappointment at not being able to celebrate this sacrament, since I counted not merely on its efficacy in a purely local propagande, but on the occasion it would furnish for a most useful tract in the form of a narrative of the occurrence. . . .

On Friday, 19th Aristotle last [March 16, 1855], died in this village Eleanor Maria Blacker, a young woman eighteen years of age, whose sprightliness and good humor made her the very life and spirit of the entire neighborhood. But moreover, with all her vivacity, she had a wisdom far beyond her years. On the one hand, she dis-

tuo Figlio, 'Amem te plus quam me, nec me nisi propter te!' The second quotation is from the *Imitation of Christ*.

Comte gradually came to regard his Supreme Being, Humanity, as the mystic son of Clotilde de Vaux, and so Humanity, the father of all mortals, became the father of its mother, just as Christ, as God, is the father of the Virgin Mother.

¹ Of the three angels, Edger identified correctly only Rosahe Boyer. Clotilde de Vaux is in the foreground of Etex's painting, and Sophie Blot in the background.

about us; but all through, at every possible point, inculcating positive doctrines. Finally, under the heading "Positive Religion of Humanity," I just indicate, of course very briefly, in some eight or nine pages, these principles: 1. The heart is the center of our spiritual existence — "Live for others"; 2. Our practical life can be regulated only by the law, "Live in open day"; 3. Universal substitution of duties for rights; 4. True theory of property possible only on this basis; nothing henceforth a ground of personal privilege; 5. Society necessarily hierarchical; equality only in education; and consecration of all inequalities to the common service; 6. The Priest of Humanity alone capable of enforcing upon the rich the performance of their duties towards the poor, whom they ought to govern and not prey upon; 7. Positivism also regenerates the family, developing monogamous marriage, however, and systematizing eternal widowhood; 8. But marriage to be purified by excluding mercenary considerations, and having a moral and not merely physical end. Man ought to provide for woman universally; in case of need, collectively; 9. The full development of domestic love, the principal source of human happiness. The family a school of universal love; 10. For ourselves, we prepare, especially our children, by personal and domestic worship, for the glorious future assured to Humanity, seeking, too, to hasten its advent. . . .

My friend J. Metcalf and myself both feel the need of some symbol or token of our Faith capable of material representation, like the cross of the Catholics. Mr. Metcalf has felt disposed sometimes to wear a cross; but this would not at all satisfy me. I feel as though I must have something fully normal. I want law everywhere; all our trouble springs from the exercise of will. Let me but have an indication on any point whatever from our cherished and revered Spiritual Authority, and every hesitation ceases.

I am quite longing for the arrival of the *Appeal to Conservatives*, for from its pages I shall doubtless learn to understand the nature of those relations I am instructed to seek with the Jesuits. . . .¹

My position and antecedents alike seem to impose on me a mission specially among the revolutionaries. The positive criticism to which I have in my first tract subjected our so-called Equitable Commerce I would like to extend to the free love doctrines, to democracy, to

¹ Comte says that the *Appel aux Conservateurs* "systématise la politique actuelle en indiquant la manière dont les conservateurs régénérés doivent utiliser à la fois les rétrogrades et les révolutionnaires, tout en les dominant" (*Lettres d'Auguste Comte à divers*, I², 283).

You must not waste your time in publishing refutations of anarchical sophisms.¹ Spend it rather in spreading positivism by means of conversation.

My *Appel aux Conservateurs* will make known the course you should follow in dealing with the existing parties, and also guide you in your relations with American conservatives.

You are right in saying that positivists should not wear the cross. It belongs to Catholicism, as the crescent belongs to Islam. You forget, however, that we have already symbols and tokens of our own: for example, the recitation of our fundamental formula² with the right hand placed successively on the cerebral organs corresponding to love, order, and progress, while the left hand placed on the heart indicates that blood is needed to accomplish our aims. Then we have our flag.³ And positivists have the right to wear a green ribbon on their left arms, and to suspend from their necks a statuette of Humanity resembling the image of the Virgin Mary—a resemblance which will help in the transition from the worship of the Virgin to the worship of Humanity.

I hope that you will fraternize with our new convert, John Fisher, a surgeon of Manchester, England.

EDGER TO COMTE

The reader will remember, no doubt, that in a previous communication Edger told Comte that he feared that certain vicious personal habits would render him forever unworthy of entering the positivist priesthood. We have now come to a letter (Thales Sunday, 7 Aristotle 68; March 3, 1856), in which the American apostle of positivism, in a fit of profound discouragement, reveals so frankly what these habits are that I cannot reproduce here the beginning of his confession. Suffice it to say that he has just consulted Dr. Curtis, an eminent homeopathic physician of New York City, who has informed him that his early sexual excesses have finally produced physical derangements which may result in a lumbar abscess, or even in complete paral-

¹ Comte taught his followers that a simple statement of positivism would achieve better results than a controversial or a critical attitude towards old beliefs.

² For the sacred formula of positivism, see p. 84, n. 2, above.

³ A description of the positivist flag may be found on p. 84, above.

satisfaction to my heart.¹ I shall rejoice to receive the commands of Your Reverence in regard to my own insignificant participation. What I have done spontaneously is just this. I printed my little pioneer tract, as I am now printing the *Calendar*, at my own cost. I set down the whole of this cost as my contribution to a publication fund; all returns that may accrue from sales I intended to hold in trust for printing other works in this country; but I shall now hold them at the disposal of Your Reverence.

My excellent friend John Metcalf continues to devote his principal energies to propagandist efforts. But he feels the necessity of affective consolation, and I cannot but think it desirable that he should be married. I would rejoice, too, at having an actual celebration of one of our sacraments in this country, especially as the presentation of our dear babe is still delayed by the impossibility of finding a godmother.²

For some time past John Metcalf has been residing with Catholics. Among them he has found affective sympathies such as he could find nowhere else. He even contemplates the possibility of his marrying a Catholic. He believes that he could find no other wife whose influence would not be essentially irreligious. I have hitherto sympathized with him in this view, but I feel that the subject is of so much importance that I need the pontifical advice in regard to it.

My friend seems carefully to avoid becoming too intimate with any one of the female acquaintances he has thus formed until he can know certainly what course would be most right — i.e., most in the interest of our holy cause. Since his residence among Catholics, and the constant attendance of both of us (whenever I have been in New York City) at the Catholic worship, we have been represented among our negativist acquaintances as relapsing into Catholicism, a powerful means of arousing prejudices against positivism. But one convert from Catholicism will be worth many such as we can obtain from among socialists, especially American socialists.

However, I have sought to avoid propagandism among Catholics. Our influence has rather been to invite them to a more assiduous practice of their own faith, in which they see themselves surpassed by us, as well as in the respect we pay to their priesthood, towards

¹ This fund was established by Comte for the publication of books dealing with positivism.

² It should be borne in mind that after two years of propaganda and proselytizing John Metcalf was Edgar's sole convert to positivism.

his own incorporation into the Industrial Chivalry,¹ would be an object of ambition extremely gratifying.

I have never been able to lay aside the hope that such a one might make his advent some day among us in this village of Modern Times. It has seemed to me that if this movement here were to transform itself into a systematic attempt to collect a population of completely religious positivists who should cultivate among themselves all the dispositions and habits proper to the normal proletariat, ever keeping in view the advent of such a patrician chief, the strongest motive would be held out to such a one to devote his capital and his energies to the industrial direction of such a population.

No such result could be accomplished in a settled country. But the United States is from end to end in an essentially nomadic state. No family is fairly attached to the soil. Many of those most susceptible of conversion to positivism would find themselves destitute of such a home as they would desire to leave to their families. I do not know whether it might be legitimate to invite such to settle alongside of us here, in order not only to enjoy social intercourse with those sharing their Faith, but also to institute, as far as possible, the normal attachment of their families to the soil. If it were so, an end would be furnished to which the practical energies of those around me might rally.

When I first came hither, some such aim constituted the principal object of my ambition. I have long laid it aside, save as a very secondary matter. . . .

Humbly saluting Your Reverence in all affection, and with profound gratitude and respect,

His devoted disciple
HENRY EDGER.

To M. Comte,
First Supreme Pontiff of Humanity.

performed towards Humanity and a few hundred thousand capitalists. The proletarians will be happy because they will know that the priesthood is watching over them. Veneration and submission will be the most praiseworthy characteristics of the laboring man of the positivist era. In short, he will play the rôle of the Algerian burro in Dandet's *Tartarin de Tarascon* — that is, he will support everybody and everything.

¹The retired leaders of industry, the knights of the future, will defend the weak — that is, women, priests, and proletarians (*Système de pol. pos.*, IV, 150).

for the advantage of such a historian to record his labors, and of such an arbiter to appreciate their value.

That Comte, eager for recognition of his stupendous work, was pleased with Brewster's article is proved by the following extract from a letter which he wrote to John Stuart Mill (November 20, 1841):

Je dois . . . une reconnaissance plus spéciale aux penseurs anglais, chez lesquels . . . mes travaux ont été beaucoup plus accueillis que partout ailleurs, même en France. Le seul article d'appréciation qui ait encore été entrepris à ce sujet, du moins à ma connaissance, est celui de *The Edinburgh Review*, en juillet 1838. . . . Quoique ce jugement ne se rapporte qu'aux deux premiers volumes, sa parfaite spontanéité m'a montré avec quelle loyauté et quelle élévation vos grands critiques comprenaient leur mission.¹

Although Brewster had the honor of introducing Comte to Great Britain, it was John Stuart Mill who brought the philosopher before the entire world. Mill was first attracted to positivism in 1837, and in 1844 and 1845, during the period of Comte's greatest financial distress, he persuaded George Grote, William Nassau Molesworth, and Raikes Currie to contribute two hundred and fifty pounds sterling towards the support of his French confrere. From 1841 to 1846 Mill and Comte carried on a correspondence in the course of which Mill proclaimed himself a disciple of Comte, but a disciple who reserved the right to criticize and to exercise as well as to receive influence.²

In his *A System of Logic* (1843), Mill spoke so highly of Comte and his theories that attention was drawn to them in such remote regions as India and the wilds of Virginia.³

¹ *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à John Stuart Mill (1841-1846)* (Paris, 1877), p. 2.

² *Lettres inédites de John Stuart Mill à Auguste Comte* (Paris, 1899), published by L. Lévy-Bruhl.

³ Sir Thomas Erskine Perry, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Bombay, became interested in Comte's works because of Mill's praise of them; and George Frederick Holmes, of Virginia, found Mill's appreciation of Comte most helpful in his study of positivism. For Perry and Holmes, see my *Auguste Comte and the United States (1816-1853)* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1936), pp. 129, n. 2, and 63 ff.

ditions, it will be imprudent for him to marry her. And I could not allow the religious ceremony to be performed.

I am glad that you and John Fisher are corresponding. You and he please me because of your full and sincere adhesion to the maxim in which I have condensed positivism: "*La soumission est la base du perfectionnement.*"

EDGER TO COMTE

Comte's letter had a bracing effect on Edger, who, in his reply (Hildebrand Sunday, 14 Saint Paul 68; June 2, 1856), promised to follow the régime suggested by the Supreme Pontiff, although he feared that he might fall again into his former errors. There was one item, however, in Comte's prescriptions which irked the disciple — that is, the question of food.

In the development of this admirable regimen [Edger says], there is but one point of detail on which I have immediately to seek further assistance from Your Reverence, if indeed in our present material situation any assistance be possible. I am not able to limit my diet to two meals a day. Breakfasting about seven o'clock, dining about half past twelve, I require a third meal when I leave off external labor, about seven or half past seven in the evening; for I often work hard ten or eleven hours in the day, which to me, quite unaccustomed to such toil, are as much as twelve or fourteen hours to an able-bodied laborer inured to his occupation.

Now, although some little experience will enable me soon to arrange my breakfast and dinner, I know not what to take for my third meal. I have been very much accustomed to making bread and butter enter very largely into my diet, and the evening meal has usually been composed almost entirely of these two combined articles. But, with the severe toil I at present necessarily undergo, although working on my own land and on my own exclusive responsibility, I seem to be forced into using more in quantity than I think desirable, especially in the absence of tea and coffee.

letter to his disciple Dr Audiffrent, of Marseilles (November 1, 1855), he relates that a certain M. and Mme Fill, married two weeks previously, have just visited him and told him of their happiness in observing "the sacred obligation" of chastity. Comte adds that this obligation "constitutes the true honeymoon" (*Lettres à divers*, I¹, 293).

emportements of which he has been witness, that most distresses and discourages me. I have been forced or hurried, too, into severe punishments in some flagrant cases of this disobedience, which, however, seem to have been useless or even injurious. Thus I cannot but fear that my son will have to commence his systematic instruction under the disadvantage of a complete absence of that respect and reverence for his teacher which is so indispensable a condition of successful education.

Of course, I should feel less concerned on this score if my wife were so organized as to be capable of fully sympathizing with me. Of a sanguine temperament — that is, without much muscular force, but with well-rounded forms, a nervous system sensitive, yet inactive — she might have been eminently adapted, as I used to think, to become the mother of children of a father with such a constitution as mine. But then, for the very same reason, she was ever incapable of reciprocating the ardent and enthusiastic passions filling my bosom, and thus left an aching void in my heart from that want, so imperious in natures like mine, of a profound and active sympathy. . . .

This mutual insufficiency was revealed first while I remained yet theological. I wanted more sympathy in the enthusiastic devotedness at once to the service and to the will of God which was then my ideal; while my wife suffered for the want of sympathy in the concern, to her so natural, awakened by our material condition — already precarious, although not then penurious. Such a state of things could not but prepare me for the enthusiastic reading of *Jacques, Valentine, Lélia*, and all those sixteen volumes which then seemed to me the inspired productions of the messiah at once of woman and of the emancipated human heart. . . .¹

All these explanations as to myself seem necessary in order to permit of sufficient directions from Your Reverence. I would be glad if I could complete them by the transmission of my portrait. I can only add here that my complexion is dark or sallow; hair and eyes brown; height about 1 metre 71; chest small, but somewhat expanded by a partial regimen instituted twelve years ago; skin tender but somewhat hirsute.

After remarking that John Metcalf is lending him money to carry on his nursery business, Edger advances the idea that it would be a good plan for positivists of various countries to correspond each in his own native language. "This practice," he

¹ Concerning *Valentine, Lélia, and Jacques*, see p. 129, n. 1, above.

be. We must become the directors of Occidental opinion. In the long run we shall triumph; we shall rule the entire world.

In order to give a precise direction to our policy of social intervention, I have requested Fisher and Congreve to take the initiative in a free and pacific restitution of Gibraltar to Spain. If positivism can win this first practical victory, it can soon busy itself with analogous cases — for example, with the oppression of Italy by Austria.¹

EDGER TO COMTE

This letter deals chiefly with further details concerning Edger's struggle against the fooleries of Modern Times, and with his endeavor to make his domicile more nearly suited to the size of his family and to the demands of the Religion of Humanity.

Modern Times, Long Island,
21st Descartes 68 [October 27, 1856.]

Very reverend and dear Father:

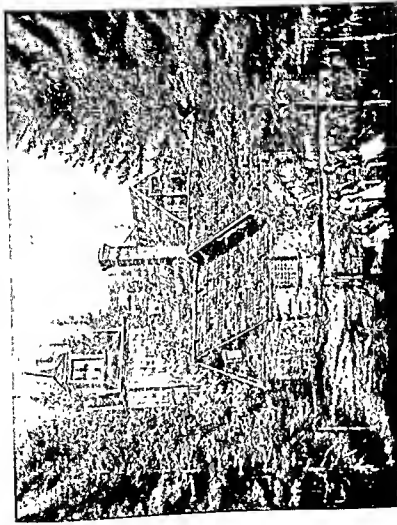
. . . This has been a year of exceptional labor on my part. I have had simultaneously to superintend the printing of my first systematic effort at positivist propaganda,² and to direct and take active part in the building of that further domiciliary provision for my family dictated to me by the paternal solicitude of Your Reverence.

Not only has this double duty absorbed my time and my strength, but my pecuniary resources, as well as those of my excellent friend John Metcalf, so that, greatly to my regret, it has been impossible to avoid an unfortunate delay in the remittance of our subscriptions. We have already paid over \$50 to the printers, and I have to pay another \$50 almost immediately, besides \$10 just now to provide for advertising, and over \$20 paid a year ago for the *Modern Times*

¹ Comte wished to reform international policy by basing it on morals. Inasmuch as positivism seeks the well-being and the moral unity of mankind, he inveighed against war, political rivalry, and the spirit of monopoly and jealousy arising from commercial greed. He was especially severe on nations which attempt to acquire more territory when they already possess too much, as well as on those which try to force their ideas and customs on peoples not sufficiently advanced to receive them.

When the positivist era is fully established, according to Comte, the world will be divided into five hundred unified, harmonious industrial republics about the size of Belgium or Holland.

² *The Positivist Calendar*



Henry Edger discoursing on positivism at Modern Times In the background Edger's log cabin, with its new addition. From a contemporary painting.

ship, at least so far as the social sacraments are concerned, I ventured to perform a sort of ceremony, amounting to a consecration of this portion of our building, in the same semi-public manner, *viz.*, before a circle of invited friends and neighbors. The result was the awakening of a deep interest in the most intelligent and cultivated of all our actual neighbors, a new settler of the present year, and also, on the other hand, such an intensification of the persecution, especially from the Metcalf family (all due, no doubt, essentially to Mrs. Hayward) as indicates more plainly than anything else could do the extent to which our growing power is felt. The manner of this semi-consecration was a reproduction of an English practice, hardly normal perhaps, designated "laying the foundation stone."

It permitted me, however, even before the erection of the tower, to make known the signification we attached to it, calling special attention to our borrowing from Mahometanism the *Kebla*,¹ and from Catholicism the form I adopted, *i.e.*, of the tower and spire. This took place on our last Tasso Sunday [August 4]; my building was completed sufficiently to permit of my commencing the regular *institution of private worship, personal and domestic, within our new oratory* only a fortnight ago. . . .

My excellent friend and disciple John Metcalf has been compelled by interruption in his health to leave New York City for a while and take up his residence in my family. For a few days I was really alarmed for his life. . . . But his strength and health are very greatly restored now. His society is a source of great and really needed consolation to me; besides that his industrial assistance, although he can work but a few hours daily, is invaluable to me in the completion of my new residence, especially inasmuch as the more vulgar workmen by whom I was at first aided disliked the trouble occasioned them by my scrupulous preservation of the old log cabin as far as possible,² by which I sought to keep up the sentiment of continuity in my children. . . .³

¹ The *Kebla* is the point towards which Mohammedans turn their faces in prayer—that is, towards the Caaba in Mecca. In the Religion of Humanity, Paris, the Holy City, replaces Mecca.

² Fortunately, Edger's "Journal" has preserved for posterity the names of the vulgar workmen who helped to build the oratory. They are as follows: Walter Smith, J. S. Loveland, Clark Orvis, Joshua Monroe, Isaac Haines, Isaac Gibson, and G. S. McWatters.

³ Concerning Comte's view that the disappearance of the sentiment of continuity characterizes the Occidental malady, see the *Système de pol. pos.*, I, 364, 365.

in your first tract, you won their confidence and respect. *The Positivist Calendar* will increase your influence over them.

I am delighted that you are enlarging your house. You will be the first positivist to meet the religious requirements of the domicile.

Your age and the social instability of the United States will enable you, in fifteen or twenty years, to convert Modern Times into the spiritual center of a positivist island, which will soon form a separate state in the Union. Although Long Island is officially a part of New York State, it is more closely connected geographically with Connecticut. It has all the characteristics of a separate state, and will shortly be more densely populated than Rhode Island. The proper inducements will bring to Long Island in a short time a population of worklagmen more than sufficient to fulfill the legal conditions required of new states. Long Island may thus become the social head of North America, and the religious link between Paris and the New World.¹

If you cannot find a positivist to act as godmother for Sophia Clotilda, choose a Catholic or even a Protestant, provided the person is fond of the child, and admits the supremacy of the positivist faith over local and provisional faiths.

The religious solution is the only hope for your Yankees; European socialistic remedies are worthless.

EDGER TO COMTE

We have now reached one of the most interesting letters of the correspondence of Edger and Comte, — that in which the American apostle describes his attempt to teach his son and daughter according to the positive method. A few words concerning that method will make his procedure more comprehensible.

The chief aim of the positive education is the improvement of human nature, so that the individual may be capable, through development of all the capacities of body and mind, of a more earnest and intelligent devotion to the service of Humanity.

During early childhood, — that is, from birth to the age of seven, — the child's training is physical and moral, not intellec-

¹ One thinks immediately of the visions of Picrocholo.

tice of private worship — that is, he will begin the systematic expression of feelings of esteem, gratitude, and love for Humanity.

In the third phase of his education (from the age of fourteen to twenty-one) the youth passes from mother and family to the priesthood, which will give him a complete theoretical instruction for the purpose of enabling him to conceive aright his general position and duties as a child and servant of Humanity. After the physical, moral, and esthetic training of childhood, he now begins his scientific education, which will take him through Comte's entire hierarchy of the sciences.

Edger's letter to Comte follows:

Modern Times, L. I.,
10th Moses 69 [January 10, 1857.]

Very reverend and dear Father:

. . . I am devoting this winter at once to the translation of the fourth volume of the *Positive Polity*, to the writing of my *Industrial Constitution*, and to the education of my children. . . .

In the education of my son, the indication already vouchsafed by Your Reverence has been most efficacious. Since I have occupied him alongside of myself, and avoided all severity, he has visibly improved. . . .

Anxious to institute normal conditions, I would not for a long time undertake myself the instruction of my children. But their mother, although more and more sympathetic with our religion, finds herself unable, although perfectly willing, sufficiently to surmount the habits of a lifetime to undertake the normal education. Hence, now that for the first time these late years our domestic accommodations have made it possible to turn to account, in this direction, the comparative industrial leisure of the winter season, I have commenced a course of regular instruction, spending an hour or so every evening in singing or poetical readings with the two children who have attained their second childhood, Henry and Lelia, aged, respectively, twelve and eight years.

Unfortunately, I have never acquired the use of the pencil. I am hoping, however, that M. Étex's *Cours de dessin*¹ will enable me, when I can afford to procure it, to complete and systematize the in-

¹ The *Cours élémentaire de dessin* of Antoine Étex appeared in 1851.

and, in French, *Paul et Virginie*, I concluded that, for my children at all events, I must overleap the sacred bounds and get other books. Accordingly I gave them several, including some in French.

I felt, however, a growing objection to using any book not in our Library, and determined, therefore, now that I was going to give regular lessons, to try to avoid it. I began by selecting some fables from Florian. . . .¹ I may mention here that my method in teaching to read French is, as in singing, to lay aside all the systems, grammars, and so forth, and just *to read*. First I read the French; then I explain the story in English; then I read and repeatedly reread the original; then let the children read it; and seeing that they keep in mind the general signification, do not dwell at all on the exact English equivalent of each separate word. *The real meaning*, I tell them, is *in the phrase*, not the separate words.

I soon determined to consecrate the evenings of one week to singing and of the next to poesy, and so on alternately, giving a whole week to each order of exercises. I then determined to try to develop my method farther: to see if, by a proper mode of presentation, the children's intellects could not be brought up to the level of the poetic *chefs-d'œuvre*, instead of having books *written down* to their supposed level. The next reading-week, accordingly, I began boldly with Shakespeare's *Tempest*, explaining very fully the scenes and situations, omitting, or passing over lightly, what seemed least suitable, but still reading essentially the entire play during the week.

I found I could chain completely their attention. My little Lelia exclaimed: "Oh, I like the reading even better than the singing." On the following reading-week I took up *Twelfth Night*, which was quite as successful as the *Tempest*; and then, recurring to some of the best scenes in both, I directed the children, after the readings we had had together, to pursue a solitary study of such scenes.

But the occidentality of our positive education has ever been an attribute of prime interest to me. And consequently my success with Shakespeare soon led me to try what I could do with Molière. Accordingly, last week I began, though not without some misgivings, on *Le Malade imaginaire*.

However, once more my success was complete. I explained, as before, the scenes and situations, but even more fully. Then, after reading a scene in French, concurrently with that reading I explained the dialogue, and so made the children, as they assured me, fairly understand the play. After thus going through the whole,

¹ French fabulist (1755-1794).

EDGER TO COMTE

In this letter, Edger first tells of his efforts to acquaint his two oldest children with personal and intimate worship, and of his attempt to interest the Irish laborers of Modern Times in positivism. Then, in somewhat bitter lines, he upbraids his European coreligionists who, although strong upholders of the positive doctrine, fail to establish a church and a priesthood.¹ Praise of Richard Congreve and discouragement with the progress of his own propaganda complete the list of topics treated in this document.

Modern Times, L. I.,
11th Aristotle 69 [March 8, 1857.]

Very reverend and dear Father:

. . . Since my last letter I have made a first attempt at leading my two oldest children to institute the personal and intimate worship. . . .² I have tried to explain our intimate worship both to Henry and Lelia, and invited them to practise it. Henry entered into it very readily, and has appeared to be very much improved by it. Lelia does not seem to know how to begin.

Some of our new neighbors, who have come hither only with the common aim of making a successful pecuniary speculation, have brought here some families of poor Irish laborers to do their heavy work. Among these, quite a proportion, as usual in this country, are Catholics. As a matter of course, I could do no otherwise in regard to these than in regard to others, so far as I have had to enter into any relations at all with them: namely, in maintaining a protective attitude. The principal occasion of any such relations was the birth of a child in a family located near us, when the only assistance obtained by the poor mother was that rendered by my dear wife and another female neighbor. From the moment when my wife was first summoned to render assistance on this occasion, she has spontaneously extended a very noble benevolence towards these poor creatures, whereby we have attained considerable influence over their souls. This we use in seeking at once to develop in them as much of

¹In a subsequent letter, Edger apologized to Comte for this act of presumption and arrogance.

²For this worship, see p. 153, n. 1, above

COMTE TO EDGER

9 Archimedes 69 (April 3, 1857).

Your recent letter indicates that you were bitter and discouraged when you penned it. I too am sad, because the anniversary of the greatest catastrophe of my life — the death of Clotilde — is approaching. In 1864 I shall publish a biography of the angelic inspirer of the Religion of Humanity, which will provide our successors with a commemoration more deserved than that with which our predecessors honored the chimerical Passion of the alleged founder of Catholicism.¹

The true adepts of positivism must expect the violent animosity of literati and bourgeois, who for selfish reasons wish to prolong the present lack of moral discipline. Be prepared for calumny. Our deeds and our lives must answer for us. Beware of false positivists who accept my philosophy but reject my polity and my religion; they will soon become our worst enemies. The greatest disappointments to me, however, are the complete positivists who reject none of my religious rules, dogmas, and practices, but whose habits are not regenerated by their hearts.

I congratulate you on your friendship with Catholics, who are always possible proselytes. My convert, the former revolutionary Alfred Sabatier, has begun negotiations in my name with the general of the Jesuits in Rome for the purpose of organizing a league to save the Occident from the immense disorder by which it is threatened. Of course, positivism alone can preside over this league.²

I agree with you when you say that Richard Congreve will make an excellent priest. You too ought to prepare for the priesthood. You can secure the required mathematical and scientific education before you reach the age of forty-two.

Do not worry about your children. Lelia's age and sex account for her backwardness in private worship. Henry is superior to her because private worship demands abstract contemplation, which is more tardy in women than concrete contemplation. Above all, respect the spontaneity of your children.

¹Because he regarded Jesus as a revolutionary, Comte recognized not him but Paul as the founder of Christianity. Christ does not even figure among the 558 worthy mortals commemorated by the positivist calendar.

²On February 20, 1857, Comte's disciple Alfred Sabatier sought an interview in Rome with the general of the Jesuits, Bex, but the last-named, never having heard of Comte, turned his ambassador over to one of his underlings, a certain Robillon. Needless to say that the negotiations between Comte and Bex ended then and there.

In spite of his "cerebral hygiene," which prevented him from reading contemporary writings, Comte read *A System of Logic* with pleasure, and thanked Mill for his appreciation of his labors (May 16, 1843).

Il n'est pas en mon pouvoir [he wrote] de vous remercier dignement . . . de votre généreuse sollicitude à me rendre, en toute occasion, l'éclatante justice philosophique que vous avez cru m'être due; cette puissante appréciation, la première récompense de mon travail, et la plus décisive de toutes celles que je puis désormais espérer, m'a laissé une intime impression de reconnaissance qui ne finira qu'avec ma vie.¹

It would seem that a friendship between two men so peculiarly fitted by nature and by training to understand each other could have been terminated, as Comte implied, only by death. Such, however, was not the case. When, in 1845, Comte, with his usual tactlessness, informed his generous English well-wishers that he expected their temporary financial aid to be converted into a permanent subsidy, Mill began to turn away. And later, when Comte constructed on the foundation of his positive philosophy a polity and a religion, several fundamental principles of which Mill could not accept, the breach became irreparable.²

Next to Mill, George Henry Lewes, *littérateur* and philosopher, was the most influential of the British writers who early sought to create a favorable reception for Comte. In 1843 Lewes published in the *British Foreign Review* a fifty-page article entitled "The Modern Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy of France," which contains extravagant praise of Comte and his system. Of much greater importance, however, because of the

criticized Mill's judgment of Comte as follows: "Mill's whole estimate of Comte was mistaken. He proclaimed him as a great philosopher, and then deplored the decadence of his ability. And to this estimate of Mill's was largely due the spread of Comte's doctrines where they were the most influential."

¹ *Lettres d'A. Comte à J. S. Mill*, p. 141.

² For further information concerning Comte and Mill, see Thomas Whittaker, *Comte and Mill* (London, 1908); J. S. Mill, *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (London, 1865); and Dr. J. H. Bridges's reply to the last-named work, *The Unity of Comte's Life and Doctrine* (London, 1866).

We four have our several places within the oratory; the two little infants remain in the adjacent apartment, upon which the oratory opens, and whence they can witness the whole service.

I ought perhaps still more to apologize for venturing to communicate an arrangement I have made of the *Imitation* by which a particular chapter or part of a chapter is appropriated to every day in the year. My dear wife has suggested that a new sympathy might be instituted among believers by their reading the same portion on the same day. . . .

The information so graciously communicated by Your Reverence in regard to the embassy of M. Alfred Sabatier to Rome is by far the most encouraging that could possibly have reached me.¹ How much do I long to read his promised work! Especially if it is to be in the Italian language, for it is a most beneficial exercise, I find, to read new and varied presentations of our dogma—or, rather, of our Faith. I find it beneficial even to read my own little tract. But to read positive conceptions in our sacred language would indeed be refreshing.²

Our Catholic neighbors here, although poor and uncultivated, and even coarse and dirty, are to me a double source of consolation. Especially from the opportunity it has given my dear wife to develop virtues that endear her to me indeed. The incessant kindness and gentleness she manifests towards these poor creatures, her noble benevolence, which makes her treat them in such a manner as to remove from them all painful or humiliating sense of inferiority, while only enhancing their respect and stimulating their gratitude, manifest to me at once her native goodness and the beneficial virtues of our Faith and worship upon her, far beyond anything which she can as yet verbally express.³

¹ For Sabatier's mission to Rome, see p. 139, n. 2, above. Concerning the "promised work" mentioned below, Comte says "Sabatier élabore, à l'usage du public italien, une judicieuse exposition sommaire du positivisme" (*Lettres à divers*, I^{er}, 203).

² In the positivist era the Italian language will be first the sacred, and then the universal, language, because of its "musical aptitude," and also because of all languages it has been "the best cultivated by music and poetry" (*Système de pol. pos.*, IV, 96).

Comte began learning Italian in 1839 while traveling in France as *examinateur* of the Ecole Polytechnique.

³ Cf. John K. Ingram, *Practical Morals*, p. 110. "Woman will have other means of continuing her moral education in the charitable offices which naturally devolve on her sex, and in which the pecuniary gifts, at times necessary or useful, are greatly brightened in value by the accompanying manifestations of a tender feminine nature."

proletary conditions, in combination with such a degree of intellectual and esthetic culture as I possessed, that I could most serve Humanity. I sought to exhibit labor, hard labor actually rendered, attractive by voluntary submission to a noble Faith. . . . I must confess that a position of spiritual eminence has in it something almost terrible to me. To bow to authority is, indeed, a sweet privilege; but to wield it is a fearful thing!

I cannot feel sure that the disqualifications to which I am so deplorably subject can in any wise be removed, linked as they are in part with physical debility. Time alone can reveal this.

Meanwhile I am much encouraged by recent indications as to the course of our American propagande. The only decisive result, however, is in the case of a socialist connection of mine, a worthy English proletary, who emigrated to New York some time before me. My two tracts very much impressed him. . . .

The devoted disciple of Your Reverence

HENRY EDGER.

COMTE TO EDGER

I Saint Paul 69 (May 21, 1857).

The manner in which you have planned your domestic worship convinces me that you possess eminent aptitude for the priesthood. I have not yet examined your assignment of readings in the *Imitation* to certain days of the positivist year, but I thank your wife for this inspiration.

Although Benedetto Profumo, of Genoa, is thus far the only avowed positivist in Italy, I am sure that Alfred Sabatier will help to effect the conversion of the Italians.

In your efforts to spread positivism, remember that my motto at present is: "Conciliant en fait, inflexible en principe."

In fifteen months your son will be fourteen years old. During those months you must prepare yourself to direct his mathematical studies. Review arithmetic, algebra, and geometry, and acquire a good knowledge of trigonometry and the higher branches of mathematics. My Positivist Library will give you the titles of the necessary textbooks.

I am overjoyed that you are willing to enter the priesthood. John Metcalf will furnish the best personal type of the normal proletary in the midst of the Occidental anarchy. You must become a priest, since your bourgeois rearing bars you from the pure proletariat, in

sented to stand sponsor for Edger's child if Mrs. Edger will perform a like service for the ten-months-old infant of the Parkers. This double ceremony Edger will perform in the presence of non-positivists in the hope that the Religion of Humanity may profit from the publicity.¹

After sending the High Priest of Humanity the gladsome tidings of his new convert, Edger waited seven weeks for the pontifical missive authorizing the presentation of the two infants to the Great Being. Then, on the 23d of Dante 69 (August 7, 1857), fearing that his letter had been lost in the anarchical mails, he wrote another letter, in which he reproduced those portions of his preceding communication which related to the proposed ceremony. He added that Richard Parker, his wife, and four children were then at his home in Modern Times, and that he had prepared for the celebration a public lecture "well adapted to urge upon contemporary society, as well as our immediate medium, the doctrines of our Faith, especially the separation of the two powers and the religious nature of the actual social crisis." "It is a painful disappointment to us," he continued, "that an irregularity in the post-office, the first ever intervening in the course of my correspondence with Your Supreme Eminence, should come just now to disturb all the arrangements on which all of us here have been so much counting for these two or three months." A week later (2 Gutenberg; August 14), having still had no word from Comte, Edger wrote him another letter, imploring him to dispatch the necessary authorization.² Finally, towards the end of August, he received from Joseph Lonchampt the frightful news that

¹In this letter, Edger reveals to Comte his plan to outwit the editors of newspapers who are hostile to positivism. He says "I think there is one means by which we can decisively surmount the journalist conspiracy of silence, as soon as we have the necessary material resources. By simply advertising our books judiciously we can inform the public of the existence of our Religion, and even indicate its tendencies, in the columns of the newspapers themselves, in spite of the editors."

²From Edger's "Journal" we learn that in August, 1857, the sacrament of presentation was administered to Sophia Clotilda, John Metcalf and Mrs. Parker acting as godfather and godmother.

by which Thine holy side is pierced, — wounds inflicted by the vain self-assertion of fools, — our souls bleed at every pore. We foresee that without our Head we shall prove but a rope of sand; in but a few months our actual seeming confraternity will be scattered as it deserves to the four quarters of the heavens!

But a worthier hand shall arise, O divine Lord and Master, really to inherit Thy traditions, alone holy, wise, and true. Thy mantle shall fall spontaneously upon a real successor, although hidden from Thine own eyes. . . . Upon us, Thine unworthy disciples, the universal loving Mother,¹ from whose benign countenance Thine own hands have drawn aside the veil of ages, smiles sweetly, cheering the bed of death and making it radiant with peace and hope and joy. I have myself only just experienced this, for, by a stroke of cholera morbus, I have but lately had one foot in the grave. But Thou Thyself hast to walk through the gloomy shades alone, save only that the adorable Archangel of the future² smiles sadly upon Thee. But one day! Oh! yes, Thou divine Teacher, one day Humanity shall recompense Thee, and at the name of Comte all nations shall bow in tearful gratitude, in penitent adoration.

Let, then, the wicked drive the nails of proud revolt into Thy sacred hands, pierce Thy divine side with the cruel spear of presumption: Thou shalt be worshipped and adored, aye, even from this day forth, with tears of sympathy, gratitude, and filial devotedness streaming down our cheeks. . . .

We are separated again: our newly converted Brother and Sister, with their sweet children, have returned to their home, intending to assemble here again on the arrival of the sacred permission which perhaps may now never come. But none the less shall our children be really — even if the form be permanently denied them — presented to Humanity, and consecrated to the sublimest Saint before whom the knee of man can ever bow. . . .

My beloved wife will write a few lines with this.³ Our little band

¹ Humanity

² Clotilde de Vaux.

³ In a brief letter to Comte, Mrs. Edger says: “. . . Language would fail me, most reverend Father, to express the gratitude I feel for the benefits conferred upon me and family from the conversion of my beloved husband to the Religion of Humanity. I confess that for quite a time I took but little interest in it, in consequence of having suffered so intensely from the various phases of anarchical beliefs he passed through from the time of losing his faith in Christianity to that of his entire acceptance of positivism. In fact, for a time I felt a blank despair, believing in nothing. Little did I think that any domestic happiness could ever fall to my lot. Still less did I think that



A group of positivists celebrating the anniversary of Auguste Comte's death at Père-Lachaise Cemetery, September 5, 1934. In the foreground the tomb of Sophie Blot (Mme Thomas)

with Pierre Laffitte, Comte's successor as head of the universal positivist movement. The proudest achievement of Edger's apostolate was, however, his administration of the sacrament of marriage to his faithful friend John Metcalf and his bride.

On 4 Frederick 69 (November 8, 1857), the "Journal" states, occurred the preliminary ceremony of the positivist marriage of John Metcalf and Clara Christiana Osborne. The couple stood before Henry Edger, at the house of Richard Parker, in Hickory Street, Brooklyn, "intending at the expiration of one month to enter into a legal marriage together . . . and solemnly pledging themselves . . . to retain an inviolate chastity from the time of their legal union until the celebration of the sacrament of marriage according to the ordinances of the Universal Church of Humanity." Then, nearly two years later (28 Gutenberg 71; September 9, 1859), instead of the usual three months of chaste preamble,¹ the marriage was completed according to the positivist rite. Kneeling, Metcalf said: "I desire to be united with Clara, she being a virgin, in an eternal marriage according to the positive doctrine; and I beg before the altar here raised to the worship of Humanity to have my engagement of eternal widowhood recorded by the Universal Church." To which the bride, kneeling, responded: "I, Clara, being still a virgin, desire to be united with John in eternal marriage, and also beg to have my engagement, etc." Henry Edger, the officiant, then pronounced these sacred words: "In the name of Humanity, and by virtue of the authority delegated to me by Auguste Comte, I pronounce you married." To close the ceremony, Edger removed the green ribbon, the symbol of the Faith, from his own arm and attached it to the wrist of the bride.²

¹ See p. 172, n. 1, above.

² Let us sum up the requirements of marriage in the positive religion: preliminary chastity of bride and groom; strict chastity between the civil and the religious ceremonies; sexual intercourse for procreation only; and finally, complete chastity during eternal widowhood. Divorce is allowed only in case of the condemnation of either husband or wife to a degrading punishment which involves social death (it will be observed that this exception was made in favor of persons in the same position as Clotilde de Vaux, whose husband disappeared

Regenerated Future of the Human Race. A Sermon Preached at Modern Times, Long Island, on Saturday, 24th Gutenberg 75 (5th September, 1863), Being the Sixth Anniversary of the Death (Transformation) of Auguste Comte, Founder of the Religion of Humanity. In this pamphlet, Edger, still hopeful even while the Civil War was raging around him, says (pp. 30, 31): "The positive community which it is intended gradually to form here will have for one of its principal objects the introduction of practical ameliorations in industrial relations. . . . Our community will essentially consist in a free aggregation of families rallying around the center of positive instruction here planted. Without any definite territorial limits. . . ."

Then Edger prescribes as follows the duties of American positivists in view of their special mission of establishing a positive community: first, they must contribute to the sacerdotal subsidy and the typographical fund of the central body in Paris; then, they must use all secondary and local means for developing and sustaining the positive spiritual action, especially at Modern Times; and finally, they must seek to realize, as far as possible, the normal industrial conditions.¹

Edger closes his exhortation to his "beloved disciples" with the remark that, "although public worship is denied us, and even domestic worship is difficult of institution, private prayer is available to each individual soul."

At a date which I have been unable to determine exactly, but surely before his departure from the United States, Edger did something which ran counter to the positive doctrine of eternal widowhood which he had upheld for years. His first wife, Melliscent Hobson, having died, he married a second wife, who bore him four children.

About 1880² Edger, impelled probably not so much by disappointment at his failure to win the United States to positiv-

¹ For these conditions, see p. 151, notes 1 and 2, above.

² This date was given me by M. Paul Edger. Additional data concerning the last ten years of Henry Edger's residence in the United States follow: (a) The

l'étude et de la propagation du positivisme le but principal de sa vie." ¹

2. JOHN METCALF

Metcalf, an Englishman, was reared a Protestant, but, renouncing Christianity, he embraced various socialistic doctrines before he found consolation at last in positivism. In the United States he made his home at one time with his brother and sisters and with Henry Edger at *Modern Times*, at another in New York City, where he worked as a carpenter. As will be seen from the letter published below, he was far inferior to his friend Edger in both intelligence and education.

His first letter to Auguste Comte, which deals mainly with the benefit he has derived from the moral discipline of positivism, and with his attempts at propaganda among the Catholics and the Protestants of New York City, runs as follows:

New York,
5th Homer 68 [February 2, 1856.]

Most reverend Father:

After having been engaged for about four years as the first pioneer in a movement of the most anarchical kind, in the commencement of a village in the wilds of America, the Positive Religion, as translated from the *Catéchisme* of Your Reverance by my beloved friend Mr. Edger, offered most opportunely that discipline so necessary. The idea that morals admitted of the most improvement offered the most sublime satisfaction and gave a direction to my energies.

I sought regular employment in New York City, devoting my

¹ *Revue Occidentale*, May 1, 1888, p. 400. — Besides the works by Edger which I have already mentioned, he wrote a number of others — for example: two pamphlets, published posthumously, entitled *The Universal League of Religion: Series of Systematic Letters to a Faithful and Devoted Disciple* (John Metcalf?) in a *Rural Village of Ohio, United States of America* (Versailles, April 22, 1888). He also composed a number of opuscles on positivism for the edification of his son Henry which were never published. The manuscripts of these works are now in the possession of M. Paul Edger.

Henry Edger's second wife, a positivist, died in Paris on April 28, 1913, and his son Charles, who was brought up according to the strict program traced by Auguste Comte, died in Paris on June 5, 1908 (*Revue occidentale*, July 1, 1913, pp. 231-233, and November 1, 1908, p. 309).

Please address John Metcalf, Mr. P. Meany's, 78 Bayard Street, New York City.¹

In his reply (3 Aristotle 68; February 28, 1856),² Comte says: "I am especially touched by your homage to the angelic patron to whom I owe the moral regeneration which alone enabled me to transform the positive philosophy into the religion of Humanity." Comte not only sanctions Metcalf's association with the Catholics of New York City and his efforts to convert them to the positive religion, but he speaks also of "the holy league, which is to rally the Catholics to the positivists against the Protestants." He especially advises Metcalf to continue his glorification of the Virgin Mary as the mystic precursor of Humanity, and adds that the worship of the Virgin may be easily transformed so as to bring Catholics, particularly women, to the positivist worship. Henry Edger, he declares, finds the anarchists of Modern Times abhorrent, but he is defending these erring souls against the calumnies of their "official adversaries." If Metcalf and Edger will only continue as they are now doing, Comte states, they will realize his plan of baving the positivists ally themselves with the retrograde Catholics on the one hand, and with the revolutionaries and anarchists on the other. But he insists that they must take care to dominate both camps.

Metcalf wrote Comte three other letters (August 3, 1856; January 10 and July 7, 1857), which are not of sufficient interest to be reproduced here in full. Some of the topics treated in them are: Metcalf's desire to write a pamphlet entitled *Catholicism, Anarchy, Positivism*, which will be made up of a conversation between a Catholic lady and a positivist proletary; his inharmonious relations with his brother, his sisters, and Mrs. Hayward, and their opposition to positivism; his work in New York City, "making patterns for castings in a machine shop"; his intimate worship, addressed principally to his mother; his

¹ Metcalf's letters to Comte are in the archives of the Société Positiviste, in Paris.

² Comte's letters to Metcalf were published first in Paris in 1889 (8vo, pp. 90), and later in *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à divers*, I^{er}, 331-344.

ence of the majority of the citizens must depend on a salary, not on a fixed income, and that recourse to violence is directly opposed to the establishment of the positivist era of peace. Indeed, by using violence in labor disputes, Comte declares, the proletariat merely perpetuates the military system which positivists seek to destroy by transforming it. Positivism, Comte continues, favors the use of "workmen's leagues" as a weapon to secure an increase in wages, but it regards such associations as an extreme means, and furthermore, it obliges each worker to respect the "free spontaneity" of his fellows. As for political violence, it is antagonistic to the people's welfare and is profitable only to ambitious literati and bourgeois, since it prevents the formation of true public opinion, which, under the direction of the positivist priesthood, will soon become the best social resource of the proletariat. These general principles, Comte concludes, should be applied in Metcalf's relations with American, English, and French proletariats.

What became of John Metcalf after his positivist marriage to Clara Christiana Osborne on September 9, 1859, is none too clear. An anonymous writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* asserts, without offering any proof, that he eventually abandoned his efforts to convert the proletariat of Modern Times, New York City, and the world to positivism, and removed to Ohio.¹

¹ The *Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1890, p. 136, "Comte and his American Disciples." This brief note, which is full of errors, was written shortly after the publication of Comte's letters to Edger and Metcalf.

In the *Revue Occidentale* of March 1, 1887 (pp. 278-287), there appeared a report which had been sent to Pierre Lafitte, director of positivism, by the Society of Humanists—that is, by a group of positivist proletarians of New York City. This report, which is dated June 6, 1886, states that Henry Evans, who died in Brooklyn at the age of fifty on September 26, 1879, was the first proletarian positivist of New York. Evans, according to the report, was an English Catholic whose parents emigrated to Toronto when he was a child. Removing to New York in 1861, he became a free-thinker, but was later converted to positivism. A complete positivist, he endeavored to establish *foyers* of his coreligionists in Brooklyn and in New York City. He was by trade a printer.

The assertion in this report that Evans was the first proletarian positivist of New York is erroneous. As early as February, 1855, Henry Edger speaks of the conversion to positivism of John Metcalf (see p. 147, above).

as he was being given up in France, he emphasized the fact that in the latter country Comte's reputation, far from declining, was assuming importance through an increase in the number of his disciples, and especially through the adhesion of such men as the physiologists Littré, Segond, and Béraud, the anatomist Robin, and the organic chemist Verdeil. In the first part of his book, in treating the philosophy of the five preliminary sciences of Comte's hierarchy¹ (to which he added psychology), Lewes not only epitomized Comte's views, but made the mistake of inserting "a large admixture of criticism, illustration, new speculation, and fact." In the second part, which deals with social science, he added nothing, because he deemed it wiser to let the creator of sociology speak for himself.

Comte was displeased with Lewes's volume. First of all, he objected to the radical tendencies of the periodical in which Lewes's articles had appeared; and secondly, he was dissatisfied with Lewes's presentation of his doctrines. "L'exposition," he wrote Henry Dix Hutton (November 13, 1853), "est très insuffisante, et même . . . souvent infidèle. Ce volume me semble rapidement composé pour prendre les devants sur la publication prochaine de Miss Martineau, qui, j'en réponds d'avance, sera beaucoup plus satisfaisante, et surtout plus consciencieuse."²

Although flattered at first by the homage of Lewes and Mill, later, when the two Englishmen rejected the Religion of Humanity, Comte could not find terms opprobrious enough to express his scorn for them. He even spoke of the "sorte de conspiration permanente des lettrés anglais contre le positivisme social au nom du positivisme intellectuel," which was due, he said, to the "efforts de MM. Mill, Lewes, etc., et de toute la coterie du *Times*, pour détourner de lire mon *Système de politique*

¹ Comte's hierarchy is arranged as follows: (1) Mathematics, (2) Astronomy, (3) Physics, (4) Chemistry, (5) Biology, (6) Sociology. Each of the sciences of this series is one degree more special than the science before it, and depends on the facts of all sciences preceding, and cannot be understood without them.

² *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à divers* (Paris, 1902-1905), I¹, 517.

And even six days earlier (May 6, 1851) Comte informed his disciple Dr. Audiffrent, of Marseilles, that he had learned from Wallace that the rich and the literati of the United States felt that their families and their property could be defended only by a new spiritual power, and that positivism alone could protect them from the ravages of communism. "La suprématie occidentale de Paris, comme métropole de la régénération commune, est pleinement acceptée à Philadelphie et à New-York, tandis qu'on y répugne à Londres, où l'on espère encore arrêter le socialisme." ¹

Once carried away by such a roseate vision, Comte, although he did not have a single avowed follower in America,² lost no time in proclaiming the rapid invasion of the United States by his doctrines. To Benedetto Profumo he wrote on August 8, 1851, that the true American conservatives, overcoming their British prejudices and the pride inspired by their republicanism, were calling on positivism to save them from "redoutable levelers." "Philadelphie," he continued, "a les yeux fixés sur Paris, au moins autant que Madrid ou Milan, et beaucoup plus que Londres, ou même Berlin." ³ And on the following day he declared: "Philadelphie se reconnaît un simple faubourg de Paris, séparé par l'Atlantique, au lieu de la Seine." ⁴

In his third annual circular to the subscribers to the sacerdotal fund (January 5, 1852), Comte, more and more enthusiastic, wrote:

Les principaux conservateurs des États-Unis d'Amérique ont noblement invoqué la religion positive comme leur seul abri systématique contre les tendances subversives de la plus anarchique des populations occidentales, dans un milieu qui d'abord exclut toute répression matérielle. Ils acceptent dignement les sévères obligations morales que leur imposera le nouveau pouvoir spirituel,

¹ *Lettres à divers*, I, 48

² Comte claimed Horace Binney Wallace as a complete positivist, but I have shown elsewhere that he was mistaken. See *A. C. and the U. S.* (1816-1853), pp. 72-74.

³ *Corr. inéd.*, III, 216.

⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 217.

essentially practical, in Holland, and the other, principally theoretical, in Ireland; and that elsewhere positivism had found only isolated adherents, even in England and America, the countries most accessible to positivist propaganda.

However, the discouragement of the Supreme Pontiff was of short duration. On the 18th day of Aristotle 66 (March 15, 1854) he received the letter which apprised him of the complete submission to the positive doctrine of Henry Edger, and a short time later the communication which announced the *conversion of the eminent proletary, John Metcalf*, "*who*," he explained to Dr. Audiffrent, "is beginning already to make his influence felt among the workingmen of New York City." His optimism restored, he examined again the *cas américain*, and the philosophy of history revealed to him the magnitude of the mission of Edger and Metcalf. They would, he said, soon convert to positivism the proletaries of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, the noble descendants of the Pilgrims who fled to America to escape English oppression, and who thus far had had only one opportunity to manifest and develop their social aspirations — that is, when in 1775 they rose and cast off the despised British yoke. Positivism would make these worthy grandsons of Cromwell's soldiers rise again in the midst of a degrading industrialism. Once animated by an organic doctrine, they would cross the ocean and in England, their mother country, would awaken the proletariat, too long stifled by the Anglican Church and the aristocracy. Nor would Edger and Metcalf stop with the conversion of Americans and English. They would also carry positivism to Mexico and South America, where the affinities between the Religion of Humanity and Catholicism would render victory easy.²

It must be admitted that this program, — the winning to positivism of the proletaries of the United States and, through them, of the workingmen of England, and the conquest of Mexico and South America, — when taken together with

² *Lettres à divers*, I, 272, 273; letter to Dr. Audiffrent, August 2, 1855.

headway in the United States, let us see wherein circumstances there seemed favorable to the implanting and rapid growth of Comte's doctrines.

In the first place, as Dr. Thomas Low Nichols pointed out,¹ the United States was a new country, free from the shackles of tradition and long-standing prejudices, a country in which the heterogeneous mass of semi-nomadic inhabitants, ever yearning for change, were eager to listen to new ideas, new schemes, new systems, new philosophies, and new religions, especially if they held out hopes for the improvement of mankind and a more equitable organization of society. Now, the chief aim of positivism being the betterment of humanity and the rebuilding of the social structure, it seems that it should have received from Americans as much attention as some of the other panaceas — for example, as Owenism or Fourierism.²

Secondly, in contrast with the situation in Europe, American thought was free from supervision by the State and from the interference of any established Church, Academy, or University.³ This openness to new ideas, which had encouraged Protestantism to split into hundreds of fantastic sects and had allowed reformers of every stripe to apply their cure-alls, should, it seems, have cleared the way for serious intellectual

¹ See p. 104, above.

² In the very midst of the period with which we are dealing, William Henry Channing gave voice to the hopes of radical reformers and prophetic enthusiasts when he wrote to his mother (1853): ". . . the end towards which all the highest spiritual energy of Christendom is now resistlessly tending is the organic Unity of Societies, confederated in larger societies where religion and politics are made one as spirit and body." Channing added that, among other reformers, Auguste Comte justified and confirmed the hopes of those persons who longed for better things (Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *Memoir of William Henry Channing* [Boston and New York, 1886], p. 244).

³ In a letter to John M'Chntock, editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, Comte wrote (February 4, 1852): "De tous les clergés qu'engendra la décomposition, d'abord spontanée, puis systématique, du monothéisme occidental, celui des États-Unis me semble, en général, être aujourd'hui le seul qui possède un véritable pouvoir spirituel, c'est-à-dire une autorité, à la fois mentale et morale, toujours résultée de l'assentiment volontaire d'un public affranchi de toute contrainte matérielle" (*Système de pol. pos.*, II, xxiv).

ing supervised by the positive priesthood? And what would he have thought of the phase of early manhood,—from twenty-one to twenty-eight,—a period of possible essays and practical apprenticeship, in which the servant of Humanity, after his theoretical instruction, feels his way in order that he may find his proper niche in society? And what would have been his attitude towards the phase of manhood,—from twenty-eight to forty-two,—when the man, already half-way through life, chooses a profession and finally enters upon a stage of complete responsibility? I fear that the American of the mid-nineteenth century, like flesh-and-blood beings of any other time, would have thought that such a training might be very well for a rich young man who purposed to become a senator or a diplomat or a professor in Harvard College, but that it would hardly do for a prospective cobbler, farmer, carpenter, gold-miner, or any of the rest of the proletaries for whose especial benefit it was devised.

Fifthly, Comte's religion and polity deprive the individual of every shred of personal liberty. From the cradle to the grave, the positive priesthood meddles in all the principal events of life. And even in everyday events the positivist is to have little freedom. His reading must be confined as nearly as possible to the list of 150 books chosen by the Supreme Pontiff. He must make "a wholesome restriction of the nutritive instinct"; in other words, he must suppress all superfluous and agreeable food, and all stimulants, such as wine, alcohol, coffee, and tobacco. He must be strictly chaste before, during, and after marriage (of course, every man who can afford to marry must do so, in order to come under the influence of woman and family). He must read neither newspapers nor novels; the weekly bulletins of the priests must suffice. In the positivist era he must expect to see no profane dances or theatrical performances; the priests, who will be musicians, dancers, and actors, will supplant professional performers. And if the servant of Humanity does not observe these and many other pro-

States, within ten years, at least two millions of emigrants. More than a million and a quarter have gone since . . . 1846. . . . Who are these people? Mostly Irish Roman Catholics and Germans. Poverty takes many of them to the United States; oppression drives others. . . . Many of the most turbulent and restless people of the continent — socialists,¹ radicals, infidels — the very sweepings of Europe — are going to the New World. . . . Some of the most dangerous newspapers in the United States are edited by foreigners.²

In 1856 Samuel C. Busey quoted the Honorable William R. Smith as follows:

The mass of foreigners who come to this country are incapable of appreciating the policies of our government, they do not sufficiently understand our institutions. . . . Their minds are filled with a vague and indefinite idea of liberty. It is not the liberty of law, but of unrestrained license. . . . The foreigner believes that America is the natural rendezvous for all the exiled patriots and disaffected and turbulent persons of the earth, and that they are to meet to form plans and concoct schemes to revolutionize all creation and the rest of mankind.³

And in April, 1858, the Reverend Theodore Parker wrote:

The Irishman has three bad things — bad habits, bad religion, and, worst of all, bad nature. . . . Suffolk County is County Cork; Boston is a young Dublin. What shall we do with this wild Irishism which is yelping around us? ⁴

When one remembers that Comte was a foreigner, that Paris was the Holy City of positivism, and that Italian was to be first the sacred, and then the universal, language, one need not be surprised that the American positivist movement, which per-

¹ It was about this time that the word "socialist" came to stand in the United States for everything destructive and anarchistic.

² Henry M. Baird, *The Life of the Rev. Robert Baird* (New York, 1866), p. 269.

³ *Immigration: Its Evils and Consequences* (New York, 1856), p. 13. Busey speaks (p. 22) of the "Tammany Savage Society in New York . . . which is principally made up of the faeces of the sewers of Ireland."

⁴ John Weiss, *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker* (New York, 1864), I, 397. Most of the anti-foreign writings of this period were directed against the Irish and the Germans.

defends the institution of private property, whereas the upholders of property rights resented the positivist's insistence on the social nature of property. Scientists were alarmed by the prospect that in the positivist era their studies and researches would be subjected to the supervision of a prying priesthood, and non-scientists were vexed by Comte's continual praise of science. The American laboring man, Comte's beloved proletariat, who, after twenty-five years of united action, coercion, strikes, boycotts, picketing, and sabotage, had obtained the ten-hour day, higher wages, and improved working conditions, and had by his violent methods begun to put fear into the hearts of the greedy capitalists, was in no humor to accept the positive theory that the real office of salary was not to pay the value of the work done, or the decree that the temporal power should be vested in the captains of industry, while the proletariat should plod along with no hope of social betterment. And finally, American employers and capitalists, generally parvenus, were not enthusiastic over the positivist's exposure of social evils and the positivist approval of trade-unionism, or over Comte's teaching that their sedulously hoarded wealth was a collective product which should be used for the good of mankind.

In addition to the weaknesses of Comte's scheme of social regeneration, there were in the United States certain conditions, and in its inhabitants certain characteristics, which further increased the difficulties in the path of positivism. Some of these conditions and characteristics were as follows:

(a) The rank and file of the Americans of the fifties were practical, hardheaded, mocking men and women who were far more deeply concerned with contemporary affairs than with the past and its great men. A few years later David Goodman Croly summed up the situation in these words:

We Americans are a singularly irreverent people; human worth and excellence are neither regarded nor honored. . . . This gives low and mean views of life to our people. . . . The positivist's wor-

it unnecessary to master the intricacies of positivism, it followed, as a natural result, that their reviews could not convey a good idea of its details to the proletaries who Comte hoped would embrace it. And so the American critics hindered the success of positivism, not only by condemning it, but also, because of their insufficient preparation, by giving a false and inadequate view of it.¹

(f) The press and the periodicals of the United States were unfriendly to positivism. Very few non-religious periodicals noticed it at all, and of course, the reviewers in the religious publications — chiefly ministers and college professors — were obliged to condemn it or lose their positions and social standing. That the newspapers ignored the new system is evident from the fact that Henry Edger, in order to indicate the tendencies of the Religion of Humanity, felt it necessary to resort to the plan of inserting remarks concerning positivist books in paid advertisements.

(g) The foregoing reasons are sufficient, it seems to me, to explain why positivism could not gain a foothold in the United States. There was, however, another obstacle which alone was as insuperable as all the others combined. Modern Times, the center of the positivist propaganda was, as we have seen, a village inhabited mainly by bizarre men and women who were trying to foist upon the world doctrines which most contemporaries thought either ridiculous or dangerous. After a mocking press had made it known that Modern Times was the home of anarchy, socialism, communism, free love, individual sovereignty, equitable commerce, spiritualism, women's rights, and bloomerism, it was only natural that readers should jump to the conclusion that positivism, which ranked women above men and the heart above the mind, and replaced the God of the limp-leather-bound Bible with Humanity, was merely another absurd or subversive ism from the principal breeding-ground

¹ There was also some wilful misrepresentation: for example, the insistence by clergymen and professors that positivism and materialism were one.

nique, pratique, habile, mais barbare de cœur et d'esprit. Aussi *tous* les journaux yankees sont pour Nicolas,¹ *toute* la ploutocratie yankee est royaliste, impérialiste, papiste, bref ultra-réactionnaire dans le vrai sens européen du mot. L'ordre des Jésuites est très puissant ici; les 360 sectes dites protestantes sont puissantes de même.² L'instruction primaire et supérieure est nulle; le parquet, même le jury, est vénal; les fonctionnaires sont voleurs et négligents: c'est la *Russie républicaine*. Mais oui, ils ont un souverain, un Tzar-Dieu, c'est l'*Argent*. L'argent se gagne facilement ici, et chaque Américain participe ainsi au Tzar-Dieu. Voilà le résultat actuel des travaux de Franklin et de George Washington: c'est affreux, et une inexprimable douleur dévore ma poitrine.

La *liberté* n'existe pas ici, mais l'indépendance demi-civilisée et par conséquent égoïste fleurit. La fertilité du sol donne abondamment tout ce que les pauvres de chez nous n'ont pas; l'Union d'Amérique est donc la Terre Promise pour nos prolétaires. Elle l'est aussi pour nos spéculateurs de négoce. Mais c'est un enfer, un cachot, un sépulcre pour des gens tels que moi. J'y viens de perdre mes espérances les plus chéries: ni l'Amérique ni la colonie de M. Cabet³ sont ce que j'avais supposé! ⁴

L'esprit inculte des Yankees est très actif, je l'ai déjà dit; mais faute de tout aliment esthétique et scientifique, quand leurs calculs journaliers sont finis, leur âme ne trouve pas où et comment se rafraîchir, et ils cherchent alors le remède de l'ennui écrasant dans le whisky (c'est-à-dire eau-de-vie extraite du maïs), dans les con-

¹ When the revolutionary movements of 1848 spread over Europe, the Russian emperor Nicholas I sent troops to aid Austria in the suppression of the Hungarian national uprising. Later, Nicholas continued the hereditary Russian designs on Constantinople, and in 1853 provoked a war with the Sultan of Turkey. Unfortunately for him, however, the opposition of Great Britain and France plunged Russia into the Crimean War.

² Joseph Belcher found 1024 pages necessary for his *The Religious Denominations in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1857). Thirteen years earlier Isaac Daniel Rapp and fifty-three other "eminent authors" had succeeded in squeezing similar material into six hundred pages (*History of All the Religious Denominations in the United States* [Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1844; 2d ed., "improved," 1848]). Cf. Josiah Warren, *True Civilization an Immediate Necessity* (Boston, 1863), p. 162: "The Reformation was a step in disintegration from concentrated power and dominion; but it has led to other steps in the same direction — to more divisions and subdivisions of sects, till theological sectism is nearly harmless."

³ Concerning Cahet and Icaria, see p. 130, n. 1, above.

⁴ It should be remembered that a cuckold is speaking, and that cuckolds rarely see the world through rose-tinted glasses.

Mind (London, 1848), gave Comte three times as many pages as Morell had done (IV, 307-322). Like Morell, Blakey says, with some exaggeration of course, that Comte's philosophical talents are acknowledged and appreciated wherever philosophy is known and studied, but he adds that great talents do not always confer corresponding blessings on mankind. From this consideration, he feels compelled by duty to examine the merits of the positive philosophy, the evident object of which is to materialize all human thought, to leave nothing in the universe but matter, and to banish even the bare idea of a God from the human breast. Only Comte's great and unquestionable intellectual merits, and the fact that the influence of his speculations is spreading, cause Blakey to raise his feeble voice against a theory which he knows has no claim to originality or solidity. Indeed, he concludes, oblivion is the only possible fate for such a scheme.

BRITISH THEOLOGIAN

In the wake of the historians of philosophy came the vanguard of the Protestant theologians who during the greater part of the second half of the nineteenth century looked upon Auguste Comte as a heaven-sent target for their fulminations.

In 1850 in London and Edinburgh, and in 1851 in New York, the Reverend James McCosh, who later came to the United States and served for twenty years as president of the College of New Jersey, published his first book, *The Method of the Divine Government, Physical and Moral*, in which we find a number of scattered remarks hostile to Comte, "head of the French atheistical school." Having set forth the general character of positivism, the future "Pope of Princeton" proceeds to refute, to his own satisfaction at least, Comte's atheistic argument.¹

¹ For McCosh's remarks, see the fourth edition of *The Method of the Divine Government* (New York, 1855), pp. 3, 105, 131, 164-168, 240, 258, 531. In 1871 McCosh published in New York a work entitled *Christianity and Positivism*.

forts.¹ L'esclavage formera peut-être la cause pour laquelle l'Union se divisera en deux Unions ennemies, qui se feront guerre sur guerre. Royauté, empire, papauté — tout cela y sera possible.

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¹ In 1825 the United States tried to purchase Cuba, and in 1848 President Polk offered \$100,000,000 for it. In the next three years Narciso Lopez, a Venezuelan, in conjunction with Governor Quitman, of Mississippi, and other Southerners, planned three unsuccessful expeditions to seize the island. In 1854 the Ostend Manifesto, drawn up in the interests of the slaveholding South, claimed the right of the United States to annex Cuba if Spain refused to sell.

² In 1848 happenings in France unchained in the various German States a spirit of popular revolt which was not extinguished for several years.

³ The Know-Nothings, a secret society opposed to immigration, Catholicism, and the invasion of the United States by foreign ideas, was founded in 1852, and went to pieces five years later. As a political party the Know-Nothings had some success: they elected governors and legislatures in a few States, as well as a number of national senators and representatives. Their participation in public affairs led to riots and destruction of property in several cities, notably in Boston and Philadelphia. The society is said to have got its name from the fact that its members, on being questioned about their activities, invariably replied "I don't know."

nique, pratique, habile, mais barbare de cœur et d'esprit. Aussi *tous* les journaux yankees sont pour Nicolas,¹ *toute* la ploutocratie yankee est royaliste, impérialiste, papiste, bref ultra-réactionnaire dans le vrai sens européen du mot. L'ordre des Jésuites est très puissant ici; les 360 sectes dites protestantes sont puissantes de même.² L'instruction primaire et supérieure est nulle; le parquet, même le jury, est vénal; les fonctionnaires sont voleurs et négligents: c'est la *Russie républicaine*. Mais oui, ils ont un souverain, un Tzar-Dieu, c'est l'*Argent*. L'argent se gagne facilement ici, et chaque Américain participe ainsi au Tzar-Dieu. Voilà le résultat actuel des travaux de Franklin et de George Washington: c'est affreux, et une inexprimable douleur dévore ma poitrine.

La *liberté* n'existe pas ici, mais l'indépendance demi-civilisée et par conséquent égoïste fleurit. La fertilité du sol donne abondamment tout ce que les pauvres de chez nous n'ont pas; l'Union d'Amérique est donc la Terre Promise pour nos prolétaires. Elle l'est aussi pour nos spéculateurs de négoce. Mais c'est un enfer, un cachot, un sépulcre pour des gens tels que moi. J'y viens de perdre mes espérances les plus chéries: ni l'Amérique ni la colonie de M. Cabet³ sont ce que j'avais supposé! ⁴

L'esprit inculte des Yankees est très actif, je l'ai déjà dit; mais faute de tout aliment esthétique et scientifique, quand leurs calculs journaliers sont finis, leur âme ne trouve pas où et comment se rafraîchir, et ils cherchent alors le remède de l'ennui écrasant dans le whisky (c'est-à-dire eau-de-vie extraite du maïs), dans les con-

¹ When the revolutionary movements of 1848 spread over Europe, the Russian emperor Nicholas I sent troops to aid Austria in the suppression of the Hungarian national uprising. Later, Nicholas continued the hereditary Russian designs on Constantinople, and in 1853 provoked a war with the Sultan of Turkey. Unfortunately for him, however, the opposition of Great Britain and France plunged Russia into the Crimean War.

² Joseph Belcher found 1024 pages necessary for his *The Religious Denominations in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1857). Thirteen years earlier Isaac Daniel Rapp and fifty-three other "eminent authors" had succeeded in squeezing similar material into six hundred pages (*History of All the Religious Denominations in the United States* [Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1844; 2d ed., "improved," 1848]). Cf. Josiah Warren, *True Civilization an Immediate Necessity* (Boston, 1863), p. 162: "The Reformation was a step in disintegration from concentrated power and dominion; but it has led to other steps in the same direction — to more divisions and subdivisions of sects, till theological sectism is nearly harmless."

³ Concerning Cabet and Icaria, see p. 130, n. 1, above.

⁴ It should be remembered that a cuckold is speaking, and that cuckolds rarely see the world through rose-tinted glasses.

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Amid decaying systems of metaphysics, and systems of religion whose difference is too readily taken as a proof of universal unsoundness, the compact, single-eyed band of positive atheists may go very far!

The winners of the first and second Burnett Prizes at Aberdeen University in 1855 were, respectively, the Reverend Robert Anchor Thompson, with a book entitled *Christian Theism* (London and New York, 1855) and the Reverend John Tulloch, with *Theism* (Edinburgh and London, 1855). Thompson was of the opinion (p. 191) that Comte's conclusions on the most momentous questions were such as might be expected to follow from his denial of psychological knowledge. Tulloch declares (p. 8) that throughout his work he has kept in view very prominently the anti-theistic tendencies of the time, especially as manifested in the form of positivism.

Although the Reverend James Buchanan, minister of the Free Church of Scotland and professor of systematic theology in the New College, Edinburgh, condemned the positive philosophy, he had a kind word for Comte.

We have spoken sternly [he says] of his system; we have no wish to speak harshly of the man. Had we any disposition to do so, there is more than enough in the personal explanation, prefixed to the closing volume of his work,¹ effectually to disarm us. We have too much sympathy with the trials of a vigorous but eccentric mind, struggling in untoward circumstances, and against an adverse tide, to maintain a position of honorable independence, to say a word that could wound the feelings or injure the prospects of a man of science. But it is not unkind to add that his life might have been a more prosperous one had he devoted himself to the pursuits of science without assailing the truths of religion; and that his fame would have been at once more extensive and more enduring had it been left to repose on his classification or hierarchy of the sciences, with-

¹ The famous "personal preface" to the sixth volume of the *Cours de philosophie positive*.

chisme positiviste, ou Sommaire Exposition de la Religion universelle, en onze entretiens systématiques entre une femme [Clotilde de Vaux] et un prêtre de l'Humanité [Auguste Comte] (Paris, October, 1852).

HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE

When the first volume of Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* appeared in London in 1857,¹ it instantly won for its author wide fame, which grew for a decade and then gradually waned, for the very good reason that Buckle did not achieve new results in the science of history, but merely helped to spread the belief that it is possible to apply scientific methods to historical problems. Since his day, the English empirical school, of which he was a member, has brought its principles to bear on historical questions with a constant reference to the theory of evolution. As a consequence, Buckle's speculations are now regarded as antiquated, because he failed to use the method which is considered necessary by the thinkers of his own school.²

No sooner had Buckle's volume appeared than he was dubbed an auxiliary, a disciple of Auguste Comte. That this judgment is partly true there can be no doubt. As early as August 31, 1854, Buckle exhibited a close acquaintance with the *Cours de philosophie positive* when he told Mrs. Grey how to read it in such a way as to economize both time and labor.³ In his *History of Civilization* (p. 4, n. 1), Buckle says of the *Cours*: "There is much in the method and in the conclusions of this great work with which I cannot agree, but it would be unjust to deny its extraordinary merits." Later, in the same volume (p. 43, n. 23), he speaks of the *Cours* as a "very profound, but ill-understood book." And finally, in his "List of authors

¹ First American edition, New York, 1858.

² Leslie Stephen, article "Buckle," in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³ Alfred Henry Huth, *The Life and Writings of Henry Thomas Buckle* (New York, 1880), pp. 75, 76.

century in crusading for Comte's philosophy, polity, and religion.

2. HARRIET MARTINEAU'S FREE TRANSLATION AND CONDENSATION OF THE *COURS DE PHILOSOPHIE POSITIVE*

By the end of 1852 it became evident that the barrier of language was likely to destroy all chance that the six huge volumes of the *Cours de philosophie positive* had of gaining any appreciable circulation in the United States. The American theologians and laymen who knew enough French to read the work before 1853 were so few in number, and the efforts of the British critics were so scattered, that their combined influence had but little effect on the general public. Two things were necessary before Comte's doctrines could spread. First of all, the *Cours* had to be translated into English; and in the second place, but equally urgent, its 4700 pages of abstruse reasoning had to be reduced to a number which would invite the attention of the ordinary thinker. Fortunately, and at the same time unfortunately, for Auguste Comte, Harriet Martineau became interested in his philosophic theories during the very period when it seemed that American acquaintance with positivism was to be restricted to a small group of theological and metaphysical specialists. I say "fortunately," because Miss Martineau performed the arduous task of translating and condensing the *Cours* as perhaps no other living person could have done it, and "unfortunately," because the author of *Society in America* had, on account of her scathing criticisms of American life, and especially on account of her reputation as a free-thinker, become anathema to the pastor-ridden United States.

When Harriet Martineau began her translation, she was nearly fifty years old. Born at Norwich in 1802, in a Unitarian family, she was a sickly child who alarmed her parents by her gloomy, jealous, morbid disposition. While still in her teens she became extremely deaf, and during her entire life was bereft of the senses of taste and smell. An early interest

In her preface, Miss Martineau, in a patent effort to ruffle theologians and metaphysicians, says:

During the whole course of my long task, it has appeared to me that Comte's work is the strongest embodied rebuke ever given to that form of theological intolerance which censures positive philosophy for pride of reason and lowness of morals. The imputation will not be dropped, and the enmity of the religious world to the book will not slacken for its appearing among us in an English version. . . . As M. Comte treats of theology and metaphysics as destined to pass away, theologians and metaphysicians must necessarily abhor, dread, and despise his work. They are no judges of the case. Those who are — those who have passed through theology and metaphysics, and, finding what they are now worth, have risen above them — will pronounce a very different judgment on the contents of this book.

In her preface also, Harriet Martineau explains why she has translated the *Cours*. First, she says, she wishes to honor Comte during his lifetime, to acknowledge her debt to his philosophy, and to show sympathy for him in his trials. Secondly, she desires to put in the hands of the ordinary reader the contents of Comte's bulky work, which is repellent because of its redundancy and its diffuse, though rich, style (in reducing Comte's 4700 pages to one thousand, she feels that she has omitted nothing essential to either statement or illustration). Then, she is desirous of offering the English a book which will put an end to their conflicting opinions, and provide them with the firm foundation of knowledge indispensable to moral, intellectual, and social progress; especially she hopes to aid those large classes of English students, particularly in the working classes, who take an interest in scientific study, but cannot obtain satisfactory results because science in England is split up into arbitrary divisions and presented as mere accretions to a heterogeneous mass of facts. And finally, she expects to furnish an anchor for the many Englishmen who,

Chapman, London; 1853, 1875: Trübner, London; 1853: D. Appleton and Co., New York; 1855, 1858: Calvin Blanchard, New York; 1868: William Gowans, New York; [1893]: P. Eckler, New York; 1896: Bell, London.

mence spontanément l'alliance décisive entre la femme et le sacerdoce, d'où dépend surtout la régénération occidentale.¹ Elle dissipe irrévocablement les objections vulgaires sur la prétendue impossibilité de voir l'esprit féminin devenir suffisamment encyclopédique. Quoique Miss Martineau, absorbée par ce grand travail, n'ait pu suivre le développement de sa seconde carrière, j'espère que ma construction religieuse trouvera bientôt chez elle autant d'adhésion que ma fondation philosophique.²

Besides this commendation, shortly after the translation appeared Comte addressed to Harriet Martineau three letters (December 29, 1853; January 19 and April 6, 1854),³ in which he spoke in the highest terms of both her and her work.

In spite of Comte's approval, certain American clergymen and college professors saw red — the red fire of hell — when they learned of this new production of Miss Martineau's satanic pen.

Thomas Hill, Unitarian clergyman and scientist, of Waltham, Massachusetts, and later, president of Antioch College, Ohio, and of Harvard, had the honor of leading the charge against the female Antichrist.⁴ He says that, although Harriet Martineau once held an exalted position among Unitarian writers, he never liked her productions, and that her present preface, filled as it is with infidelity, he likes less than anything by her he has ever seen. Furthermore, he declares, two assertions made by her are false: first, that science is indebted to Comte (at most, says Hill, he can claim to have benefited

¹ By "Occident," Comte meant five countries of Europe and their "natural annexes," to wit: France; Italy; England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales; Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, and Scandinavia; and Spain and Portugal. And to each of the five were to be added any colonies it might possess.

² *Ibid.*, I, 169. — Harriet Martineau rejected Comte's Religion of Humanity; in fact, when she learned of it, she was "pained by the evidence of failure in a brain that had been in middle age so strong" ("Memorials of Harriet Martineau," by Maria Weston Chapman, in Miss Martineau's *Autobiography*, II, 424).

³ *Lettres d'A. C. à divers*, I², 143-153.

⁴ *Christian Examiner*, May, 1854, pp. 364-372. In all summaries in the present book, the author's language is retained as much as possible.

about which she knows absolutely nothing. Her *Society in America* is an incompetent, dogmatic, magisterial judgment of American government, literature, ecclesiastical institutions, and legislation, and of the character of the American people. In her writings there is nothing feminine; indeed, never has sex been more completely divorced from style. She writes like a political economist, a veteran statesman, a philosopher, like anything but a woman. In short, she has none of the moral and intellectual tokens of a woman, except a tendency to use strong language without understanding its strength.

Bowen declares that he has no inclination to be severe on Miss Martineau [*sic*] for her previous errors and failings, since they will bring their own punishment. But now that she has come forth as an avowed free-thinker, and has undertaken to teach the world philosophy and infidelity, it behooves orthodox Christians at least to ascertain what her opinions on these and other subjects are worth, and under what influences she has formed them. Argument can have no effect on a mind like hers, for she has never been accustomed to reason, but only to pronounce judgments. Seventeen years ago she had the impudence to say that "the American clergy are the most backward and timid class in the society in which they live, the least informed with true knowledge, the least efficient in virtuous action."¹ By her belief in mesmerism, she, "wise as an owl," shows that infidelity and credulity are separated by a very thin partition.

In the preface to her translation of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, Bowen goes on, which is written in the defiant and contemptuous tone so repulsive in her former productions, she says that she is aware that Comte's doctrines will pain and

¹In her *Autobiography*, II, 122, under the year 1855, Harriet Martineau wrote: "Theology must go out before the light of philosophy. As to the fact, the civilized world is now nearly divided between gross Latin or Greek Catholicism and disbelief in Christianity in any form. Protestantism seems to be going out as fast as possible. In Germany the Christian faith is confessedly extinct; and in France it is not far otherwise. . . . In America we see Protestantism run wild,—each man being his own creed-maker."

concludes thus: "How could a few words vent more hate and bitterness for every form of doctrine which acknowledges the existence of God and an over-ruling Providence."¹

From my consideration of the criticisms directed against Miss Martineau by two ministers of the gospel and a Protestant professor, it will be observed that the tactics of these Americans were anything but subtle. Comte's philosophy, elaborated after years of profound thought, and admittedly one of the most remarkable creations of the human mind, had with the greatest difficulty made its way across the Atlantic before 1853, but it had reached the shores of the New World bearing the stigma of atheism, and therefore it was generally judged and condemned before it was accorded a thorough examination. Towards the end of 1853 appeared Harriet Martineau's translation and condensation, and the rabid fanatics who had already pilloried Comte for his atheistic tendencies were only too eager to add the infidelity of the translator to that of the author. By this procedure they were confident that positivism would not have the slightest chance of success in a land where religious bigotry held sway and decided most intellectual questions.

After Miss Martineau's translation had made the positive philosophy easily accessible, a steady flow of articles dealing with it appeared in American periodicals. That nearly all these criticisms were unfavorable will, I daresay, occasion little surprise. The Protestant United States was poor soil for Comte's theories, and the Christian zealots who heralded their advent had by their venomous attacks on both author and translator rendered all likelihood of their acceptance, or even of their just appraisal, virtually impossible.

¹ After the savage attacks of Bowen and Atwater, I hesitate to reproduce the mild opinion of Professor Francis Wharton, of Kenyon College, Ohio. Wharton finds that in Miss Martineau's translation Comte loses the freshness and naturalness incident to the productions of a mind that grows as it speaks. He is of the opinion, however, that the translator purges the original work of much redundancy of style, and strips the text of not a few philosophical positions which would have stood in the way of its acceptance (*A Treatise on Theism* [Philadelphia, 1859], p. 243).

the simple appearances addressed to the senses? If so, what do we know? We have, to be sure, beliefs, or faiths, in that which is beyond or above nature — that is to say, in supernatural causes and logical first principles; but have we any scientific knowledge of these causes and principles, or can they be made the objects of investigation by any strictly scientific method? Yet, in thus confining the definition of nature to phenomena, do we necessarily deny the existence of a spiritual world, of which these phenomena may be only the reflections or images? By no means. And so we do wrong to the method of the positive philosophy in ascribing to it an atheistic tendency. Even in the conception of Comte, if one may credit his more deliberate avowals, it has no such tendency, but is on the contrary deeply religious.¹

But, apart from this inquiry, and without giving an opinion as to the value of positivism as a whole, Godwin feels compelled to say that he regards Comte's law of the three states and his classification of the sciences as the most pregnant thoughts which have been contributed to human knowledge during the first half of the nineteenth century.

At the end of the note which I have just epitomized, Godwin said that some day he hoped to write a more extensive criticism of the positive philosophy. This hope he realized six months later,² and those persons who are interested in the history of American thought should be pleased that he did so, since his review of some of the chief principles of positivism is one of the sanest and one of the freest from prejudice ever published in the United States. Besides, the beginning of his criticism — a description of his discovery of Auguste Comte — is marked by a personal touch which is rarely found in magazine reviews.

Godwin relates that in 1842 or 1844 he wandered into the

¹ According to Comte, atheism is more hostile to the positive spirit than any other theologism (*Système de politique positive*, I, 456).

² *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, June, 1854, pp. 621-632.

that its author had failed to catch even a glimpse of the peculiarity of the positive philosophy. And when he examined William Whewell's *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (1840), he saw that Whewell had read, digested, and assimilated Comte, but that he was either afraid or too dishonest to acknowledge his debt to him.¹ Godwin also discovered that Morell's history of European philosophy in the nineteenth century contained a superficial account of positivism, and that Émile Saisset had written something about it in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. The first public recognition of Comte of any importance Godwin found in *A System of Logic* by John Stuart Mill, who borrowed from him, but without the meanness of concealment. No attempt, so far as Godwin was aware, had yet been made towards an elaborate and impartial judgment of Comte save in a series of able articles published in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* by George Frederick Holmes, in which the writer, although disagreeing with many of Comte's conclusions, fairly and admiringly confessed his merits.²

Godwin was puzzled by this ignoring of Comte, particularly as contemporary literature and science contained not a few direct appropriations of his labors. Two considerations, he thought, seemed to explain the neglect. In the first place, scientific men had gradually developed into narrow specialists, and consequently had become so much interested in petty analyses that Comte's high, synthetic generalizations frightened them; and secondly, the reigning science could not, in consistency with its own principles, deny the validity of Comte's method, whereas to admit his conclusions was to fly directly in the face of the reigning theology. So, in their cowardice, scientists decided that silence was the better way out of their dilemma.

¹ George Frederick Holmes made the same accusation against Whewell (*Methodist Quarterly Review*, January, 1852, p. 12, note).

² For a discussion of Holmes's articles, see *A. C. and the U. S.* (1816-1853), pp. 65 ff.

artist, in the genuine sense, or of the truly religious man, he seems to entertain scarcely an inkling. By his own logic he is forced in his *Système de politique positive* to construct, as the final and comprehensive unity of thought, a Supreme Being and a religion, but his Grand-Etre is no more than the visible and organized aggregate called humanity, and his religion is only the reflective worship of that stupendous Grand-Etre. Strange indeed that one can balance so on the brink of the very ocean of light without tumbling in!

With these words, and with a promise that some day he will criticize Comte's sociology (a promise which he never fulfilled), Godwin closes his remarks on certain fundamental principles of Comte's system.

His article, brief as it is, shows that he had a good grasp of his subject and of the history of philosophy in general, that he was free from the bitterness which marked so many of Comte's critics, and above all that, although he differed at times with Comte, he was ever eager to profit by his study of his work. He offers the hackneyed objection to Comte's limitation of real knowledge to the intelligible; he finds in the law of the three states a degree of truth, but declares the law to be inadequate as a whole; and he thinks that Comte's classification of the sciences is almost perfection within the realm of strict science. All in all, he agrees perhaps more with these basic principles of the positive philosophy than any other native-born American of his day. It is only when he takes up the questions of God and first and final causes that he, evidently an orthodox Christian, feels obliged to take a stand directly opposed to positivism.

From now on, the American reviewers of the *Cours de philosophie positive* will be chiefly clergymen and college professors—in other words, professional theologians and metaphysicians. So the reader may expect harsher criticisms than that of Godwin.

philie positive. In his opinion, Comte's errors are due to his high mathematical attainments. The mathematician, he avers, deals solely with a kind of reasoning which admits of no doubt or degrees, which is infallible, and which, therefore, is inapplicable to any of the ordinary concerns of life. Resting entirely on demonstrable evidence, and perceiving that his conclusions are absolutely certain, the mathematician regards with impatience and contempt the hesitation or the total disbelief which may cling to the minds of the vulgar. So he is inclined to overweening presumption or incurable arrogance. Carrying his own peculiar logic along with him whenever he quits the territory of the exact sciences, he makes the mistake of requiring the evidence of intuition or demonstration where only probable testimony can be had, and is thus often led to reject truths which are familiar to common sense and level to the comprehension of a child. Busied exclusively with the phenomena of mathematics and the idea of necessary connection, he banishes mind and free agency from creation, and constructs a mechanical and soulless universe. These unhappy results of mathematical studies are not inevitable, Bowen asserts, since minds of a higher order, such as Pascal, Newton, and Leibnitz, can rise above them. Auguste Comte, however, inferior creature that he is, cannot do so, as is shown in the principles, the reasoning, and the conclusions of the *Cours de philosophie positive*.

In constructing his hierarchy of the sciences, Bowen continues, Comte the mathematician naturally gives the first place to mathematics. His six sciences — mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology — are, according to him, the only possible branches of human knowledge. Metaphysics, or the science of the mind, is a delusion; politics and ethics, except so far as they are deductions from sociology, are mere blunders; and theology is only a dream.¹

¹ In the second edition of his *The Principles of Metaphysical and Ethical Science Applied to the Evidences of Religion* (Boston, 1855), p. 157, note, Bowen quotes from "M. Comte, a mathematician who will not be accused of

Bowen assures the reader that he is striving to be equitable to positivism. If we leave out of the *Cours*, he declares, all the positive philosophy which is original with Comte, the work will still be a very good one. The leading and fatal error in it consists in an attempt to survey the whole field of human knowledge from a mathematical point of view, to determine the relative value and the perfectibility of the different sciences by the various degrees in which they admit of mathematical analysis, and to exclude all subjects of investigation which cannot be counted or measured. Comte, in his blindness, even makes the mistake of estimating the value of a science merely by the precision and certainty of its results, however narrow the range or limited the application of these results may be. Astronomy, Bowen says, is a very finished science simply because it is limited in its object. It contemplates only forms, motions, and positions. Of the physical constitution of the celestial bodies it knows nothing, and its idea of the mechanism of the heavens falls immeasurably short of the truth of things. The astronomer knows so accurately merely because he assumes to know so little. If the sphere of physics, chemistry, or even physiology were contracted to as narrow limits as those of astronomy, those sciences might be made to rival in precision and certainty our knowledge of the solar system.

Bowen hopes that he will not be suspected of the folly of running a tilt against mathematics: within its proper domain its triumphs are, he admits, striking and indisputable. It is only when its votaries attempt to use it as the groundwork of a flimsy and infidel philosophy that the hollowness of its pretensions for such a purpose may be fairly exposed.

By way of conclusion, Professor Bowen prophesies that positivism is not a scheme of philosophy which is likely to find

any religious tendencies." And in the same work, p. 160, note, he cites a "shallow and impious remark from M. Comte, the most eminent infidel philosopher among the mathematicians of the present day."

the radical thinkers who frightened devout Americans about the middle of the nineteenth century.¹

In January, 1856, Atwater published in the *Biblical Repository and Princeton Review* (pp. 59-88) an article entitled "The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte," which, as the reader may well imagine, was hardly a defense of positivism.²

Two systems, Atwater begins, are now current among atheistic and infidel speculatists — namely, the transcendental pantheism of Germany and the positive philosophy of France. Never, he continues, were two schemes in more absolute defiance and denial of each other. Pantheism is in the highest degree ideal and supersensual; in it, whatever is, is God; it is only refined atheism. On the other hand, positivism is wholly sensuous and materialistic, and is blank, avowed, unblushing atheism; it ungodds the universe, and erects man into the Great Supreme.³ Both philosophies deify the creature, and disown and claim to annul the Creator. Of the two schemes, the pantheistic has long been familiar to Americans, and has become a vital force in American literature and theology. The positive philosophy, on the contrary, has thus far not been sufficiently prominent in the United States to command the attention of thinkers; but it is insinuating itself surreptitiously or obtruding itself openly to such an extent that it cannot be much longer overlooked or ignored. In Great Britain "it has enlisted an enthusiastic corps of able expositors and defenders, whose productions are undergoing rapid reprint and circulation among ourselves." These and other works have made a sufficient impression in Great

¹ Atwater (1813-1883) was a graduate of Yale College and of the Yale Divinity School. In 1835 he became pastor of the First Congregational Church in Fairfield, Connecticut, where he remained for nineteen years. The rest of his life he spent as professor of mental and moral philosophy and of moral and political science in the College of New Jersey, at Princeton. He was a prolific writer of articles of a controversial nature.

² For Atwater's onslaught on Harriet Martineau, see p. 25, above.

³ Cf. Anatole France: "Le positivisme est un catholicisme sans dieu, et, dans toute religion, c'est toujours le dieu qui importe le moins" (*Œuvres complètes illustrées* [Paris, 1928], XVII, 288).

evidence of a philosophic mind. It is one among innumerable proofs that, if the system here arrayed against Christianity is in itself contemptible, the ability and tact of its advocates are far from being so."

In the hierarchy of the sciences and concomitant questions, Comte displays, in Atwater's opinion, prodigious power and a cyclopedic mastery of the whole field of physical science; indeed, he throws out a multitude of original and valuable suggestions, which are, however, deformed by being connected with the fontal heresies underlying his entire system. Then, prudently, Atwater says: "Upon these heresies we have no time to remark in detail. We gladly hand them over to the masters in the several departments."¹

After a few sneering observations on Comte's sociology, on the arch-enemy, the "Romish Church," and on Comte's contempt for Protestantism (all of which observations I shall reproduce later in the present volume), the Reverend Mr. Atwater declares that he has given a faithful, though necessarily inadequate, exhibition of the fundamental principles of the positive philosophy. He has not aimed, however, to present an argumentative refutation of Comte's system. "Such gross atheism and materialism," he says, "must stand self-refuted with the readers of this journal, who may be presumed to be theists and Christian believers."

¹ Unfortunately, Comte met no such masters in the United States. His critics were invariably incompetent because of their ignorance of the sciences, because of their failure to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the entire contents of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, and because, being generally Protestant theologians and metaphysicians, they allowed their prejudices to blind them to the many excellent principles of the positive philosophy. Would that they had been as circumspect as the American preacher, scholar, and reformer Theodore Parker (1810-1860), himself branded as "a notorious infidel" in his day, who said concerning a book by Villemain: "If I had the requisite knowledge, I would criticize this work in the *North American* or *Christian Examiner*; but the habit, so common in America, of getting all your knowledge from the author you review, and then censuring him, is villainous and unworthy. Cattle drink, and then foul the water: so these critics. . . . Most of our critics are somewhat shallow men at the best, and they write often of what they understand but feebly and superficially, and so the result is as it is" (John Weiss, *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker* [New York, 1864], II, 9).

ton Review a twenty-five page criticism by Atwater of Mill's *A System of Logic*. The truculent pastor, roused by his attack on Comte, evidently wished to lose no time in warning his followers against the virus in Mill's masterpiece.

A System of Logic, he affirms, is an auxiliary to Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive*, and, like that great work, is of an order of which no single generation produces more than one. If Atwater is compelled to brand Mill's volume with the stamp of positivism, it is not his fault but the book's. He rejoices in whatever truths it contains, but his pleasure is more than neutralized by the monstrous system of error into the support of which those truths are impressed. Mill even upholds the law of the three states, because he thinks it sheds light on the whole course of history. When the drift and aim of a book, Atwater protests, is to prepare the mind for such a law, it is unfair to give the reader to understand that he is studying logic and nothing else. Had the title of Mill's book been *The Logic of the Positive Philosophy*, or *A System of Logic: Being an Introduction to the Study of the Positive Philosophy by M. Comte*, it would have been a true description of the work's real character and purpose. Mill removes supernatural agencies and metaphysical abstractions from every subject of human knowledge, and so the end of his treatise gives more than the reader bargained for in the covenants of the beginning.

Atwater notices only one divergence of opinion between Comte and Mill — namely, Comte scorns psychology, whereas Mill upholds it, and furthermore, exposes the fallacy of confounding it with physiology or phrenology. Nevertheless Mill adopts whatever is most vital, or rather deadly, in Comte's opinions, and so contributes to promote those opinions on British and American soil.

OLIVER S. MUNSELL

In July, 1857, two months before the death of Auguste Comte, the Reverend Oliver S. Munsell, of Wesleyan Univer-

our intellects, to captivate our passions, to stupefy our moral natures, and elevate our wills to the throne of a deified humanity, and then to consign us to the cold grave of a hopeless atheism.

After remarking that the law of the three states is a marvelous construction but is built on quicksands, Munsell explains how it may be rectified. First of all, the word "fictitious," as a synonym of "theological," should be stricken out. Next, Comte's definition of theological philosophy — "in the theological state the human mind supposes all phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings" — should be changed to "that which concerns itself with the first and final causes (the origin and purpose) of all phenomena." Such modifications, Munsell holds, would restore equilibrium between science and faith. Then there should be expunged from Comte's law the ideas of the absolute succession and of the *radical* opposition of the three philosophies. At the same time, metaphysics, which Comte denies an independent existence, should be given its proper position as a fundamental branch of human knowledge by restoring to it psychology, as a legitimate source of facts, and logic, as the valid dialectal instrument by which those facts may be classified and reduced, if possible, to the positive form rightly conceived. And finally, theology, metaphysics, and science should be recognized as coördinate branches of human knowledge, each supreme in its own peculiar sphere.

Having revised the law of the three states for the use of Christian theologians and metaphysicians, Munsell proceeds to Comte's classification of the sciences, and of course he protests against the narrow horizon of science as the necessary limit of knowledge. "This restriction," he asseverates, "is based upon ignorance and presumption, not upon modesty and humility."

In Munsell's opinion, positivism, which leaves man to feed on the very husks of emptiness, and to solace himself with the arid speculations of a fruitless science, can never achieve

From the wreckage of the positive philosophy, the Reverend Mr. Munsell would salvage especially Comte's method, which promises results in the highest degree valuable when applied to the development of the natural sciences. Indeed, it has already met, Munsell says, with a hearty welcome from the disciples of almost every school, who have accepted Comte's classification of the sciences, as well as the essential and well-marked lines which he has drawn between the domains of theology, metaphysics, and positive science. Comte's method will prove to be his most valuable legacy to man, and will in due time lend its powerful aid to hasten the day when a perfected science, a lucid, all-comprehending philosophy, and an all-conquering Christianity shall unite their forces to drive at once atheism and idolatry, skepticism and superstition from the abodes of men.¹

CHARLES WOODRUFF SHIELDS

In January, 1858, Charles Woodruff Shields published an article on the positive philosophy² which must be reckoned among the most able American attacks on Comte's system.³

In his criticism, Shields is to pursue an argument which, if not new, has, he asserts, by no means been exhausted. He is not to assail positivism on theological or metaphysical grounds, since an argument based on such premises would be due, in the estimation of positivists, to mere partisan adherence to a waning

¹ I shall reproduce later Munsell's views concerning Comte's polity and religion.

In a criticism by Munsell of H. L. Mansel's *Limits of Religious Thought* in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* (New York), July, 1860, pp. 365, 366, there is a brief mention of Comte.

² *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, pp. 1-27.

³ Shields (1825-1904), a member of the theologico-metaphysical school, was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1844, and three years later from the Princeton Theological Seminary. Appointed minister of the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in 1850, he remained in that position for fifteen years. In 1865 he was made professor of the harmony of science and religion in the College of New Jersey. A fair-minded man, he spent a large part of his life in endeavoring to reconcile the conflicts of science and revealed religion, and to rescue Protestantism from the vagaries caused by its bizarre variations.

gence displayed on the face of nature does not belong to nature itself, but shines through from beyond it, out of that one Eternal Mind by which it is upheld and directed. For instance, in astronomy, the most positive of the sciences, since every law presupposes an intelligent lawgiver, we are obliged to conceive of gravitation as nothing less than the strenuous exertion of the Almighty Will among the planetary masses, and as the ultimate and the simplest expression of eternal purpose in respect to their movements. Astronomy, instead of assailing theological convictions, actually upholds them with all the force of mathematical demonstration, by inviting us reverently to think of God as the Sublime Mechanician. And what is true of astronomy is true of the other sciences, including sociology. So, Shields concludes, intellectual antagonism between theology and positive science does not exist.

In like manner, he goes on, it may be shown that there is no moral antagonism between the two tendencies. It is asserted by positivists that sentiments inspired by theology — inspired by its own illusory and transient nature — are repugnant to the more rational and permanent sentiments evoked by positive science. The theological spirit, Shields objects, instead of being supplanted by the positive spirit, is actually invigorated by it, since a realization of the limited power of man over the universe helps us to conceive of the unlimited power of God, and impels us to resort to him in all the more confidence and joy. The spectacle of an entire universe under the regulation of laws would be not only logically inconsistent but morally appalling without the notion of a beneficent Lawgiver.

And finally, Shields declares, there is no social antagonism of the two tendencies. Comte maintains that as long as theological theory prevails, and the consequent moral sentiments abound, the mass of individuals spontaneously concur upon a basis of common opinions with some degree of stability, order, and peace; but that no sooner do these fundamental opinions begin to be assailed by heresy, infidelity, and schism than

the law of the three states is wholly unsustained by the evidence of human nature and of human history. The facts of our mental, moral, and social constitution unite with the facts of our historical experience in showing that the three pursuits, instead of waging exterminating warfare, are but so many allied interests of truth, equally spontaneous, legitimate, and permanent.

To confirm such an argument no better illustration is needed than positivism itself. The positive philosophy is merely a product of the metaphysical tendency, and the positive religion merely a product of the theological tendency. Shields can conceive of no abstractionism more wild than that which would construct the entire fabric of human knowledge out of an empty generalization of history, and of no fetishism more gross than that which, having studiously invested the notion of humanity with the attributes of Deity, then invites mankind to love and serve it as its god. So Comte's system not only fails on its own premises, but remains a conspicuous monument of the failure. Professing to deride theology and metaphysics, it stands forth as itself, in its own perverted sense of the words, the most metaphysical of all metaphysics and the most theological of all theologies.

This well-ordered article, which no doubt satisfied theologians and metaphysicians, but which Comte would have rejected as devoid of positive proofs in support of the arguments advanced, was not the end of Shields's efforts to reconcile theology and positive science.

In 1861 he published in Philadelphia a little book entitled *Philosophia Ultima*, which had a profound influence on the writings of the remainder of his life. In this brief essay, — it contains only ninety-six pages, — he sought to present a survey of the views of his day on "the collisions of the theological and scientific classes during the past three centuries, and the rise of that anarchy of the sciences and consequent anarchy of opinions, institutions, and interests, which has become the

A regrettable feature of Wharton's otherwise praiseworthy essay on positivism is his distortion of some of the facts of Comte's biography. According to Wharton, Comte was born in 1788, not 1798; and he was of noble descent, and so was thrown into the turmoil of the French Revolution. When he wrote the *Cours de philosophie positive*, Wharton continues, he was poor, friendless, obscure, and solitary, but when he conceived his Religion of Humanity, he was rich and had friends who were capable of appreciating and rewarding his services. He was, besides, at the head of a numerous school of enthusiastic disciples, and his genius was acknowledged even where his doctrines were the most strongly condemned. And now for his home life with Clotilde de Vaux! "He has established a home, at the head of which stands a lady who, however unreconcilable with Christian ethics may have been her connection with him, devotes powers of fascination, almost unrivaled, to the object of making that home happy." This domestic relation, Wharton adds, although most pleasant, was injurious to Comte's moral character by its impurity.¹ As if this romancing

Comte's system his fine dialectic power and his remarkable philosophic research; that James Buchanan's views on the positive philosophy were expounded in a style singularly copious and forcible; that George Henry Lewes's *Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences* was an effective condensation of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, and that his *A Biographical History of Philosophy* contained a skillful defense of Comte's principles. Horace Binney Wallace he characterized as a man of acute critical and metaphysical parts who protested against the atheism of Comte's original conception. (For Wallace, see *A. C. and the U. S. (1816-1853)*, pp. 48 ff.) He also mentioned, but without comment, Henry Edger's *The Positivist Calendar* (see *infra*), William Mitchell Gillespie's *The Philosophy of Mathematics* (see *A. C. and the U. S. (1816-1853)*, pp. 38 ff.), and Richard Congreve's English translation of Comte's *Catéchisme positiviste*. His remarks on Harriet Martineau's translation of the *Cours* I have given already (p. 26, n. 1, above), and his strictures on Lydia Maria Child's *The Progress of Religious Ideas through Successive Ages* and the first volume of Henry Thomas Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* I shall present farther on.

¹ Far from being a siren, Clotilde de Vaux was a very ordinary and a very unhappy woman. Born in Paris on April 3, 1815, at the age of twenty she married Amédée de Vaux, who shortly after became tax-collector at Méru (Oise). In 1839 Amédée stole the money in his office, falsified his books, and set fire to the building in which the office was located. Her husband a fugitive from

After a few remarks on Comte's lucid style, his singleness of purpose, his extraordinary power of classification and fine mathematical gifts, and the pure and unsordid nature of his intellectual life, Wharton begins his criticism of the positive philosophy.

Positivism, as set forth in the *Cours de philosophie positive*, can never be, Wharton thinks, complete or authoritative, because Comte excludes from the range of his observation all social history except that of the "Occident."¹ As a consequence of this error, he leaves out of consideration Asia, the birthplace of civilization, North Africa, the theater of its most luxuriant youthful growth, and America, the scene of its present greatest activity.

In his objections to the law of the three states, Wharton expatiates at length on Comte's bold assertion that fetishism was the original form of religious culture. History, Wharton maintains, proves the contrary. It may be that if fetish worship ever existed at all, it was an exceptional form, which, like what we assume the image worship of the most degraded and ignorant Roman Catholics to be, was not an original and substantive worship, but the perversion, by a gradual ignoring of the spiritual, of a religious culture the first object of which was the spiritual clothed in a material attribute or dress. If this view be correct, Wharton says, it spells failure for the induction of positivism, that in the first, or theological, state, fetishism comes first, then polytheism, and finally monotheism.

However, in order to meet Comte's position, Wharton asserts, it is not necessary to hypothesize, since it is enough to show that fetish worship exists at the present time. And to prove that it does exist he cites the testimony of Mosheim, Karl Eckerman, Layard, Archer Butler, Schlegel, Gladstone, Cudworth, Larcher, Walter M. Gibson, Gross, and Champollion.²

¹ For Comte's meaning of the word "Occident," see p. 22, n. 1, above.

² Wharton apparently tried to bury positivism under quotations. In addition to the authorities mentioned above, he cites Plutarch, Tacitus, Eusebius, Vossius, Dr. Arnold, Schaff, Babbage, Whately, William Hamilton, Schiller, and Dean Trench.

4. MINOR CRITICS OF THE POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY

Besides the major critics of Comte's doctrines whom I have just treated, — all Protestant clergymen or professors except Parke Godwin, a Protestant journalist, — there were in the United States in the decade preceding the Civil War a number of minor critics who deserve consideration. To avoid repetition, I shall reproduce of their criticisms only the portions which contain ideas not already advanced by the major critics.

AN ANONYMOUS CRITICISM IN THE *DAILY NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER*

An anonymous writer published in the *Daily National Intelligencer*, of Washington, D. C., two long articles, the first of which (February 23, 1854) deals with Harriet Martineau's translation of the *Cours de philosophie positive* and George Henry Lewes's *Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences*, and the second (March 2, 1854) contains an exposition of the positive philosophy.¹

In his consideration of the law of the three states, the writer admits some such general law of human development, but he objects to Comte's terminology. He thinks that the first stage should be called "pseudo-metaphysical," and that a theological and a metaphysical science should be recognized as existing contemporaneously with a positive philosophy, and only needing investigation by the proper method to be admitted into the hierarchy of the sciences. Comte should not say that all real science is in radical and necessary opposition to all theology, but should limit his statement to all *false* theology. And when he mocks at metaphysics, the writer assents only so far as his sarcasms apply to that which is false in the various systems of that science.

¹ The second article is based on the following works by Comte: the *Cours*, the *Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme* (1848), the first two volumes of the *Système de politique positive* (1851, 1852), and the *Catéchisme positiviste* (1852).

The sciences that comprise phenomena which are the farthest removed from humanity are precisely the most exact. In proportion as they relate to humanity, they become more complex, and hence less positive. In other words, phenomena which admit of an exact science are those beyond all human control — for example, those of astronomy. On the contrary, phenomena which are subject to our control — for instance, those of physiology — have not yet been reduced to a science sufficiently exact to afford man that power of prevision which will enable him to foretell how his physical health will be to-morrow.

Comte's failure to construct a science of social phenomena, the critic concludes, has resulted not only from his defective method of investigation, but also from the essentially intractable nature of the phenomena themselves. In plain terms, a *social science* is impossible.

ANOTHER ANONYMOUS CRITICISM

In the *Presbyterian Quarterly Review* (September, 1857, pp. 311-331), there appeared an excellent paper on the *Cours de philosophie positive*, which, unfortunately, is in the main a repetition of the objections to positivism which I have already summarized.

In Comte's investigation of biology, the writer declares, we see some of the errors of positivism. According to the *Cours*, science has nothing to do with first or final causes, and its terms should be merely expressive of fact without reference to the theory of its source. Hence Comte, imitating Blainville, defines life as "the double interior motion, general and continuous, of composition and decomposition." Never, exclaims our critic, has a more cold, calm, impassive philosophy gazed upon the grand mystery of life, which to Comte lies only in its strictly scientific aspect. Phrenology furnishes him his science of mind, and he thinks that Gall's was a "glorious mission." The idea of soul as independent of matter is with

Not by the ceremonies of religion; not by the calculations of ordinary prudence, which thoughtfully shuns vexation and puts on its own side all the chances of good fortune; but by science. . . .

The writer concludes by saying that he is not going to review the grounds of objections to Comte's "monstrous system." He has, indeed, mentioned this atheistic "no-philosophy" only to regret that Lewes marred an otherwise excellent and valuable book by the avowal of discipleship to an author whose genius no one will doubt, but whose principles are utterly at war with the passionate pursuit of the studies to which he has devoted his powers.

Orlando Williams Wight¹ used the pages of the *New Englander*, of New Haven, Connecticut (August, 1858, pp. 540-574), to assail Lewes's history of philosophy, which, according to him, is full of irreverence, contradictions, errors of statement, presumption, and skepticism, and, what is worse, suffers from the blight of "the vaunted positive method." Wight's final word is that Lewes's work is not only useless but pernicious. Its false doctrine can lead only to materialism and atheism.

In the *Methodist Quarterly Review* (New York, October, 1859, pp. 513-529), the Reverend Oliver S. Munsell declared that Lewes's history was a formal announcement of the permanent domiciliation of the positive philosophy of Comte in the Anglo-Saxon mind. Lewes's argument, Munsell continues, is made up of two general propositions: first, all attempts to construct a valid system of philosophy have failed, and therefore must always fail; and secondly, all our ideas are derived from experience: hence they are subjective, and consequently are invalid as the basis of a rational system of philosophy. Of

¹Wight (1824-1888), physician and translator, studied theology, and was ordained to the Universalist ministry. He practised medicine in Wisconsin, and in 1874 was appointed geologist and surgeon general of that State. He translated several of Victor Cousin's philosophic works into English.

not of itself sufficiently condemnatory, Mackall charges Comte (or rather "Comté," as he calls him throughout) with attempting to make the impression on the minds of his readers that the beliefs connected with theology and psychology are inconsistent with the acknowledged truths of science.

Unfortunately, Mackall presents no proofs to support his accusations against Comte. On the other hand, he has recourse to vague epithets and statements such as the following: "Comte's arguments are futile and absurd"; "sophistry"; "nonsense"; "unsatisfactory"; "ridiculous tirade"; "silly attempt in favor of atheism"; "arbitrary"; "confused"; "unphilosophical"; "want of reflection and much ignorance of biology"; "no one but a monomaniac can contemplate nature and then deny that it has an author"; "founded in a degree of ignorance and prejudice that should disgrace any philosopher"; "this is all folly"; "idle dreams"; "utopian"; "fallacy and ignorance." It must be owned that when these appreciations are reinforced by such remarks as "to attempt to give éclat to the positive philosophy by connecting it with the eminent names of Bacon, Descartes, and Galileo, though artful, is unworthy of a philosopher," and "the laws of nature, or the natural laws, had the same origin and the same sanction as the moral law, both having originated in God and both being the dictate of his will," the argument is irresistible.

The *Brief Comments*, which is made up of vituperative notes from one to ten lines in length, with page references to Miss Martineau's translation, merely indicates in the long run that its author was a Christian who believed that there is no conflict between science and theology, and furthermore, that he had unbounded confidence in the wisdom of his countrymen. "The human mind in the United States," he says, "is too free and independent to be influenced generally by the silly sophistries of the positive philosophy. This new philosophy is here disregarded and despised, except by a few professing to be exclusive in science, but who, in reality, being too

believe in the eternity of matter and in its inherent power to pass through a series of changes, in a fixed line of progress, without any divine interposition. He attaches little importance to morals and severs them from all connection with theology; and he recognizes in government no higher law than expediency. He regards metaphysics as a will-o'-the-wisp, to lead men astray from the path of practical progress. He denies that the testimony of consciousness is valid, or that any knowledge of the laws of mental action can be acquired by the most patient observation of the working of the individual mind. He eliminates from the chain of causes in human progress all supernatural agency and all individual volition. He imagines that a providential government over man must be irregular and capricious, and that the idea of law is irreconcilable with a supreme divine will. It is difficult to conceive, Lincoln says, how a strong thinker can be so deluded as to elevate matter above mind and ascribe to impersonal nature a higher unity of design than to an intelligent Creator.

By way of conclusion, the Reverend Mr. Lincoln remarks that Buckle is a monomaniac in his allusions to religion, and comparatively sane in his treatment of other subjects. Because of his spiritual blindness, he is condemned to grope helplessly through the night of the past.

JOHN FISKE'S FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH POSITIVISM

Fiske, philosopher and historian, during a two year's pre-college course of study under the Reverend H. M. Colton in Middletown, Connecticut (1858, 1859), became acquainted with the first volume of Buckle's history, which, at the request of Edward Livingston Youmans,¹ Appleton published in 1858. In his biography of Youmans, Fiske says: "I thus owed to Youmans the most powerful intellectual stimulus of those

¹ Youmans (1821-1887), writer and editor, was a promoter of scientific instruction for the educated, non-scientific public. In 1872 he brought about the establishment of the *Popular Science Monthly*.

of his sermons and other writings as late as 1853.¹ That his opinion of Comte and the *Cours* was one of mixed approval and censure is shown by the following extract from a letter addressed by him to the Reverend Joseph Henry Allen (Boston, January 29, 1851): "I shall read your article on Comte with pleasure.² I could not give you any hints about him; only can say that he is able, dull, materialistic, and ill-natured, and has made a book of sterling merit. But what a pity he can't get out of his more material phrenology! " ³

5. THE PRINCIPAL AMERICAN CRITICS OF COMTE'S POLITY AND RELIGION

Among the critics of the positive polity and religion, we shall meet some of those who have already been presented as

¹ See, for example, *Sermons of Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology* (Boston, 1853), pp. xxxix and lxii.

² For this article, which appeared in the *Christian Examiner* (March, 1851), see *A. C. and the U. S. (1816-1853)*, pp. 19 ff.

³ Weiss, *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker*, I, 381.

Besides the criticisms of the *Cours* treated above, I have come across the following mentions of Comte's work, which, however, add nothing new: Anon., *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, April, 1852, p. 274; anon., *Christian Review*, January, 1853 (in an article on Henry Rogers's *The Eclipse of Faith*); anon., *ibid.*, July, 1853 (in an article on "Christian Supernaturalism"); a reproduction in *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* (New York), January, 1854, of an article by "Sir Nathaniel" entitled "Positive Philosophy: Comte and Lewes," which had appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* (London), XCIX (1853), pp. 275-281; anon., *Southern Literary Messenger*, April, 1856 (in an article entitled "Some Thoughts on Social Philosophy"); William Dexter Wilson, D.D., *An Elementary Treatise on Logic* (New York, 1856), p. 341; Asa Mahan, of Union College, Schenectady, New York, *The Science of Logic* (New York, 1857), pp. 333, 380; Joseph Haven, professor of philosophy in Amherst College, *Mental Philosophy* (Boston, 1857), p. 586; Laurens Perseus Hickok, D.D., *Rational Cosmology* (New York, 1858), pp. 38-40; Henry Coppée, professor of English literature in the University of Pennsylvania, *Elements of Logic* (Philadelphia, 1858), pp. 270, 273, 274; anon., *Christian Review*, April, 1860 (in an article on "Modern Skepticism and its Reputation"); T. Wharton Collins, professor of philosophy in the University of Louisiana, *Humanics* (New York, 1860), p. 342. The only interesting point connected with these works is the fact that by 1856 Comte was beginning to be noticed (and of course, condemned) in college textbooks—for example, in the books of William Dexter Wilson, Asa Mahan, Joseph Haven, Laurens Perseus Hickok, Henry Coppée, and T. Wharton Collins.

Hill regards Strauss, Feuerbach, and Comte as the leaders of the infidel movement of the day. After considering the first two, he turns to Comte, who, as a thinker, he says, is vastly superior to his partners in vice.

In the *Système de politique positive*, Hill asserts, Comte presents his religious system and worship under Christian forms, but he borrows rather from Catholicism than from Christianity, the difference between which he evidently does not comprehend. Although he denies the very notion of first cause, of God, of the soul, and of immortality, he actually invents a Supreme Being and a regular worship as necessary to the welfare of society. His *Etre Suprême*, however, is humanity — humanity as a whole, as a continuous and eternal life; but, in imitation of the God of the Bible, he confers upon this power unity, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and eternity. His worship is the worship of man, and his man has no soul, no immortality, no heaven.¹ Like the papal system, after which it is modeled, Hill declares, the Religion of Humanity must have its priests, forms, and festivals, its social sacraments, and even a canonization, which rewards worthy mortals by placing them, after death, in the ideal galaxy of glorified humanity.

So, at last, Hill concludes, Comte is obliged to take cognizance of the fact that man is a religious being, and that he must have a system of belief, discipline, and worship.²

LYMAN HOTCHKISS ATWATER

Atwater is filled with choler when he discovers that Comte takes the Catholic Church as the grand concrete embodiment

¹ Charles de Rouvre found Comte's conception of humanity one of the most beautiful ever invented by a poet. He says: "Tous les morts de tous les temps continuent à vivre, d'âge en âge, non seulement dans ceux qui leur succèdent, mais dans les œuvres qu'ils leur ont léguées. Et les vivants, liés à eux par ces œuvres mêmes, sont en quelque sorte contraints de suivre la voie ouverte par les morts. C'est ce qui justifie la magnifique expression du penseur: 'Les morts gouvernent de plus en plus les vivants'" (*L'Amoureuse Histoire d'Auguste Comte et de Clotilde de Vaux*, p. 434).

² A religious regeneration was essential to Comte's mission. His *Plan des*

millenium. The infallibility of the Pope is to be superseded by the infallibility of the positive philosophy. The hierarchy of Rome is to be supplanted by a hierarchy of atheistic speculatists. Pope Pius and his successors are to be displaced by Pope Comte and his successors, disobedience to whose decrees and fulminations is no more to be tolerated than disbelief in the principles of astronomy! If liberty of conscience is to be cloven down, we would greatly prefer the iron scepter of one who owns his accountability to the Most High, from whom he claims to hold his power, to the remorseless tyranny of the atheist, who knows none higher than himself!

Nations, Atwater concludes, after casting off the yoke of civil and spiritual despotism, are, in Comte's opinion, to be induced to submit to this more terrible bondage by the law of human progress, which, from all past history, shows inductively that the social development of the race follows in the track of its more advanced thinkers. Therefore the more advanced thinkers—in the present case the positivists—should be installed and obeyed as the guides and counsellors of society.

JOSEPH HENRY ALLEN

The criticisms of the Reverend Thomas Hill and the Reverend Lyman Hotchkiss Atwater are of slight importance. The first serious attack by an American on the positive polity and religion was made by the Reverend Joseph Henry Allen, Unitarian, one of the most perspicacious of Comte's American critics.¹

From critical, Allen begins, Comte now becomes constructive; from exposition he proceeds to application. What before was a doctrine of science appears at present as a practical guide of life. The arrogant critic has finally evolved into an uncompromising dogmatist.

¹ Allen's article, "Comte's Religion of Humanity," appeared in the *Christian Examiner*, July, 1857, pp. 18-36.—Allen (1820-1898), a graduate of Harvard College and of the Harvard Divinity School, held pastorates in Washington, D. C., and Bangor, Maine. From 1863 to 1865 he was associate editor of the *Christian Examiner*, and from 1878 to 1882 lecturer on ecclesiastical history in Harvard College.

furnishes the key to his curious second career, "in which he made himself ridiculous by the sentimental extravagance which so disgusted the 'abortive positivists.' " After Comte had finished the *Cours de philosophie positive*, Allen explains, a surge of domestic love flooded him unawares and mellowed the soil for the second harvest—that is, for the preparation of his social construction. Clotilde de Vaux, separated from her husband, fell under the influence of Comte, the recluse, for a year before her death. In closeness and tenderness, this union was equivalent to a betrothal. After Clotilde's death, the saddened remembrance of this affection seems to have roused, and insensibly blended with, the sweeter memories of childhood, so as to affect the whole type and tone of Comte's meditations. His filial tenderness, his early lessons of worship, the saints, angels, and gentle human images that cluster about the thought of Catholic devotion, all had a part, along with his passion for Clotilde, in effecting that moral regeneration essential to his later task. Personal and domestic love, pent up through years of solitude and trials, suddenly asserted its sway. Left solitary again, he found the current of his being changed: the heart had resumed the rightful mastery of the intellect. And what seemed the most sterile and negative of creeds blossomed into a ritual which strives to reproduce all that in the Roman Church has won the devoted and passionate fondness of its worshippers.

It is from the same strictly personal and autobiographical point of view, Allen goes on, that we must judge almost all that is characteristic in Comte's religion. We must regard it less as the "Religion of Humanity" than as the idea of doctrine, practice, worship, culture, and social life gradually developed to meet the condition and moods of Auguste Comte, a man singularly combining the most absolute need of a religious faith with the most entire negation of its generally received intellectual postulates. In what is peculiar of its doctrines or worship, it is an hypothetical, and not, as he terms it, a

an elaborate parallel or parody of the Catholic ritual and hierarchy. In the new Church there is, indeed, the doctrine of saints and angels, five of the seven Catholic sacraments, the showy solemnities, the saints' days, and the public spectacles of worship of the Church of Rome.¹ Still more significant is the intensely despotic notion of the priesthood, or spiritual power, which claims no authority in temporal rule and renounces all ambition of wealth and secular honors, but which is so absolute in the domain of education, morals, and thought as to effect a degree of subordination and ascetic discipline of which the proudest hierarchy of Rome could scarcely dream.

Having given some idea of the spirit and aim of Comte's religious scheme, Allen now purposes to determine what sense the hermit of the rue Monsieur-le-Prince gives to the phrase "the Religion of Humanity," and also to consider some of the practical results that follow from his doctrine.

As an object of active sympathy, Allen affirms, as a motive of appeal, as a ground of social duty, the thought of a common humanity, or moral unity of mankind, has been the characteristic thing in modern Christian ethics. So he does not feel that he is dealing with anything strange and new when he is invited to regard this ideal existence as an object of service and homage. What does startle him sometimes, however, is the language in which this divinity, "composed of his own adorers," is invested with attributes of personality, wisdom, and power, as if Comte himself forgets that he is dealing with a mere fiction of speech, and believes in the existence of the Great Being he has made after his own image. In order not to charge him with silly idolatry, Allen takes his language as spoken to the heart and fancy and as simply an effort to sublimate ethics into poetry. Strangely enough, Comte speaks of his divinity in a double

¹ Allen quotes an anonymous visitor to Comte as follows: "His reproduction of many a Christian thought seemed to me but as the singing of the Lord's songs in a strange tongue."

of each individual mind. It professes to give the complete theory of human culture; and in this regard its defects are obvious. Intellectually, the scheme lacks the essentials of mental discipline and independence, which are sacrificed to symmetry and method. Morally, it seems to know little of the stern discipline of the conscience and of that regeneration of the will which is the hardest and truest lesson of practical religion. On the ghastly lack from the first of an Infinite Holy and Supreme, to whom the adoring affection and aspiration are taught to rise, Allen thinks it unnecessary to dwell. In Comte's plan, in spite of the ingenuity and even the beauty of many hints, there is something peculiarly unnatural and sad in the mockery of childhood's early piety, of generations hastening to claim their rank in a world without souls.¹

In Comte's religious prepossessions, Allen adds, it is the Catholic hierarchy which suggests the model of his fabric; and it is the Catholic dogma in its lowest decrepitude that furnishes the object of attack to his scornful skepticism. The Deity it dethrones is simply an idol, not the God of an equal and just providence, not the Father of the Christian's adoration and trust; but the arbitrary Sovereign of medieval Church mythology, a Deity of servile superstition, who condemns the multitudes of men to hopeless wretchedness for an affront not their own to his jealous majesty, and who is scarcely propitiated to show mercy on a few by the supplications of his son, his mother, and the saints. The Infinite, Incomprehensible, and Perfect One, the living bond of law and life in a universe of revolving worlds, is not so much as named or known by Auguste Comte.

As the foundation of morals and the germ of the state, Allen says, family life receives all prominence in this new system; in fact, in Comte's view, society is composed, not of individuals, but of families. Marriage should be indissoluble, even by

¹ As I shall show later, Allen fails to do full justice to the aims and motives of Comte's system of education.

AN ANONYMOUS CRITIC ¹

In his science of sociology, the writer says, Comte maintains that the laws of nature, the basis of the positive philosophy, are capable of universal extension to race and society, and that these natural laws of the social order are as fixed and as invariable as those of the heavenly bodies. Comte's unfolding of the social laws pertaining to the individual, the family, the community, and the state is admirably done, our author concedes, but it is incredible that a man of such sagacity and discernment could have been blind to God's stamp on each pillar and fragment of the social system.

It is refreshing to read — coming from such a source, — the reviewer continues, a vindication of morality as the basis of social order, a defense of the marriage relation and of the sanctity of the family against revolutionary assault, and the bold, yet just, position that ideas and social manners, and not institutions, are the seat of the evil against which complaint is made. As Comte rightly says, the reorganization of society, in order to be more than merely provisional, must be based not on a change of laws or forms of government or methods of external reform, but on a modification of the inward life of a people.² However, the writer refuses to sanction Comte's belief that theology and metaphysics cannot furnish the morality essential to social order, but that positivism can. Indeed, Comte's morality is nothing more than implicit obedience to the interests and necessities of humanity, as these are manifested in scientific development. No sane mind could believe in the success of Comte's theories. They are merely the fancies of a dreamer.

After an attack on Comte's rigid educational system, and on the reading of the *Imitation of Christ* and the *Divine Comedy* as substitutes for the Bible, the critic concludes as follows:

¹ *Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, September, 1857, pp. 311-331.

² American legislators and reformers should be obliged to memorize this sentence.

"universal spontaneous tendencies" as the logical basis of society. No social organization, however perfect in theory, can be permanent which is not founded on true morality; and history clearly testifies that no true morality is possible to consistent atheism.

However, the Reverend Oliver S. Munsell absolves Comte for many of his aberrations. Had he been reared, not in Catholic surroundings but in a pious Protestant community, how different his system would have been!

From his childhood he was environed by the delusions and superstitions of a corrupted form of Christianity, from whose despotic claims there was no apparent avenue of escape save in the embrace of a cold and cheerless, but seemingly scientific, atheism. To him, Christianity was the badge of ignorance and slavery, atheism the symbol of intelligence and freedom. Of Protestantism he *was*, and *ever* remained, *ignorant*, as his own writings conclusively prove. Had his lot fallen to him under happier auspices, had his youth passed away surrounded by the genial influences of a Bible Christianity, far different had been the philosophy which his profound and earnest intellect would have bequeathed to the world.

FRANCIS WHARTON

The fundamental vice in Comte's plan of governmental reform, Wharton says,¹ is the subordination of human conduct to absolute law.² Under the positivist régime, he goes on, freedom of thought and of action would be impossible, and individual liberty would be a thing of the past. In Comte's system everything is to be done by a splendid and exhaustive centralization, which is to ordain rites and ceremonies, creeds and beliefs, natural affection and supernatural awe, occupations and pursuits, labor and relaxation, manners and usages. All power is

¹ *A Treatise on Theism* (1859), pp. 296 ff.

² Wharton points out the coincidence of Comte's position with that of the early Puritan leaders in America. Each sought to prepare for a reorganization of society by the enthronement of a code of moral and intellectual laws. Each thought that without such a basis government and society would be insecure and unjust. But here they differed, one failing in the recognition of the *natural*, the other of the *supernatural*, element.

Comte prescribed what course is to be taken by the priests in respect to every contingency. The method of study under the priesthood is prescribed. The boy, after receiving the sacrament of initiation at the age of fourteen, is to go to the school adjoining the temple of Humanity. He undergoes a novitiate of seven years, each of which is to have its specific topic. Then Comte decrees that during his scientific preparation the pupil will be monotheistic, in adolescence pantheistic, and in maturity atheistic — a decree which, Wharton says, gives a good idea of Comte's sublime self-reliance and profound psychological ignorance.

Naturally, Francis Wharton, a Protestant, and an American Protestant into the bargain, found the prescriptions of the Religion of Humanity irksome, because they permitted no diversity of tastes. His objections he lists under four headings as follows:

(a) The sanctions of Comte's religion destroy human liberty. The positive creed is not propounded to be studied and accepted; it is a creed as to which there can be no inquiry.¹

(b) They substitute for a faith which, if false, is believed to be real, one which, if real, is believed to be false. In other words, they substitute for a believed truth a confessed sham. What can produce a more profound sense of unreality than the consciousness that we are worshipping a deity who is nothing but our own memory of the dead, who is avowedly a mere doll-providence, made and dressed for us by the priest, and handed to us to be worshipped in order to satisfy our craving for the Infinitely Lovely and Great?

¹ Cf. Anatole France: "Je ne suis pas positiviste. Je peux avoir de bonnes raisons pour ne pas l'être, j'en ai aussi de mauvaises, et ce sont les plus fortes, et celles-là, j'ose les avouer: Je n'ai pas assez de vertu pour croire et professer la religion de l'Humanité. Je n'ai pas le courage de renoncer aux fantaisies, aux caprices de la conscience individuelle. J'aime mes erreurs. Je ne veux pas renoncer à la liberté délicieuse de m'égayer, de me perdre, de perdre mon âme" (*ed. cit.*, XVII, 272).

(c) They dwarf the human by degrading the divine. The soul expands or contracts with the object of its worship. The object of the positivist worship is not a reality, but a memory. It is merely a blurred and faded picture of a procession of such of our fellow mortals as the priesthood permits to be commemorated.

(d) They establish an absolute hierarchy, a despotic priesthood, of all forms of government the most injurious.

ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY'S REVIEW OF RICHARD
CONGREVE'S TRANSLATION OF COMTE'S
CATÉCHISME POSITIVISTE (1858)

As an exact reasoner and demonstrator of facts, the Reverend Mr. Peabody observes,¹ Comte is entitled to rank with the greatest minds of the century. In his larger works the extent of his knowledge and the ability of his criticism seem almost to excuse his repulsive theories. But in his condensed positivist catechism the worthlessness and folly of his system appear in bold relief. There is, indeed, no beauty in his substitutes for faith and for society, in the abstract humanity with which he hopes to replace God, in the subjective, unconscious immortality which he sets in the place of the Christian doctrine of spiritual life, or in the exaltation of feminine sentiment above masculine thought. The *Catéchisme*, which is merely a curious specimen of misdirected human ingenuity, will win but few converts to positivism. However, it cannot be treated with contempt, since its tone is earnest, sincere, and charitable. Its moral standard is not low, though far from being Christian. In the disinterestedness of its maxims, in the teaching that the

¹ *North American Review*, July, 1858, p. 268. — Peabody (1811-1893) was born in Beverly, Massachusetts. He was graduated from Harvard College in 1826, and later attended the Harvard Divinity School. From 1833 to 1860 he was pastor of the Unitarian Church in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and was then appointed Plummer professor of Christian morals in Harvard. In 1853 he became editor and proprietor of the *North American Review*, which he controlled for ten years.

and should not be confounded with science itself, although they are sometimes included among the sciences, and even so recently as by Comte in his *Cours de philosophie positive*. This error, Carey explains, is due to the fact that much of what is really physics is often treated under the head of mathematics — for instance, the great laws discovered by Kepler, Galileo, and Newton.

Comte's review of the gradual development of science and his classification of the sciences are eminently satisfactory, Carey admits, as regards the more abstract and general portions of science — that is, down to sociology. Wherefore, then, Carey asks, should we doubt that they would be found equally satisfactory in respect to those more concrete and special portions which treat of man in his relations with the material world and in his dealings with his fellowmen — of man as a being capable of acquiring power over the various natural forces provided for his use, and responsible to his fellows and to his Creator for the proper employment of the faculties with which he has been so wonderfully endowed? If the root, the stem, and the branches of the tree of science obey the same universal laws governing matter, why should not the blossoms and the fruit be equally obedient to them?

Comte's first aim in the *Cours de philosophie positive*, Carey continues, was to prove the universality of science, and thereby to establish its unity. In addition, the *Cours* was intended by its author as the basis of a work which was to be devoted specially to social science. This work, the *Système de politique positive*, has since appeared, but in it, as in all the parts of the *Cours* which deal with man and his operations, Comte has intentionally ignored the mathematical method to which the earlier and more fully developed departments of science were so largely indebted. That he has done so, Carey declares, seems to be a consequence of his regarding mathematics as a science and not as a mere instrument for the acquisition of knowledge.

Carey objects to Comte's statement that, "in exploring the

the great laboratory of the world for facts which reveal laws. The present condition of social science is in what Comte calls the metaphysical state; and there it must lie stagnant till its teachers awaken to the fact that there is but one system of laws for the government of all matter, whether existing in the form of a piece of coal, a tree, a horse, or a man, and but one mode of study for all departments of it.

If, Carey concludes, Pascal was right when he said that we should consider the endless succession of men as one man, is it not possible that the laws of all the earlier and more abstract departments of science will be found to be applicable to the highly concrete and special science which concerns itself with the relations of man in society, and that, therefore, all science will prove to be but one? To show that such is the case is the object of Carey's *Principles of Social Science*.

It is hardly necessary to say that, despite some dissent, the influence of Comte on Carey is quite apparent.

CALVIN BLANCHARD

To a pamphlet from his own pen, *A Message to "The Sovereign People" of the United States* (New York, 1860), Calvin Blanchard, author, publisher, and bookseller at 76 Nassau Street, New York City, appended a note entitled "The Author's Experience."¹ Educated puritanically, he declares, he was converted into a zealous unbeliever by Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*. After this excellent start, he read the history of the world, took a general survey of science and art, and examined man's religious, political, and moral creeds, with the result that he became "dismally misanthropic." Then he perused Robert Taylor and Volney, and perceived that religion, the world over, differed only in name and in non-essentials. Friedrich Strauss, William Rathbone Greg, and John Macnaught

¹ For information concerning Blanchard, I am obliged to depend wholly on his account of himself, since no encyclopedia or biographical dictionary even mentions him.

Times, the Labor Question, and the Family, Hittell's *Evidences against Christianity* and *A Plea for Pantheism*, Fourier's *Social Destiny of Man*, and Howitt's *History of Priestcraft*. Although his chief aim as a publisher was to give independent readers the works of the greatest intellects and the deepest thinkers, he was convinced that the mind, like the body, must have relaxation. Therefore, with the design of combining wisdom and merriment, instruction and amusement, he published such works as Ovid's *Art of Love*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the *Basia* of Janus Secundus, and Rousseau's *Confessions*.¹

As a result of reading "liberal books," Blanchard renounced Christianity and became a convert to the religion of science (Comte's *Cours* he regarded as "more powerful in the destruction of theology than anything before written"). In order to spread the new gospel, he began writing books and pamphlets which "give a view of the results that a practical application of Comte, Feuerbach, and Fourier must produce." His own writings, he says, which are opposed to theology and its governmental superstructure, as well as to the crushing of the human passions, show conclusively that nature is all-sufficient, and that, with man's coöperation, the great aim of nature may be attained with rapid and constantly increasing speed.

Let us now examine some of the works which are praised so warmly by the man who penned and published them.

In 1856 Blanchard brought out a pamphlet entitled *Social Physics: From the Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*,² which is made up of two chapters from his second edition of Miss Martineau's translation.³ At the end of the text, one reads the following note by Blanchard: "The foregoing extract will give an idea of the bearing of the positive philosophy on

¹ Some of this information I have taken from the advertisements in Blanchard's 1858 edition of Harriet Martineau's translation of the *Cours*.

² On the title-page occur the words: "A Book for the Times: To Exterminate Political Vermin and Moral Quacks."

³ The chapters bear these titles: "Necessity and Opportuneness of this New Scheme," and "Principal Philosophical Attempts to Constitute a Social System."

mongrel, monstrous sociology," and change this vale of tears, which has hitherto been regarded as fit only to be traveled through, posthaste, to a better world, into an abode where man will be perfected and invested with all the benefit, the use, the value, and the reality of omnipotence, and empowered to realize and enjoy in the flesh, *on earth*, all that which can be conceived of unalloyed, and even of eternal, happiness. In the ruin wrought by the failure of ultra-naturalism, absolutism, aristocracy, democracy, and demagogocracy, our only hope is in positivism, which alone has not been tried and proved wanting.

That Calvin Blanchard was fond of long titles is shown by the title of his next pamphlet: *The Religion of Science; or, The Art of Actualizing Liberty, and of Perfecting and Sufficiently Prolonging Happiness: Being a Practical Answer to the Great Question, — "If you take away my religion, what will you give me in its stead?"* (1860). This work, which is a plea for the religion and the government of science, is written in Calvin's usual violent, bombastic, and often incoherent, style. It begins as follows:

The Religion of Science alone can be the antidote to the Religion of Mystery, and to the arbitrary rule, unjust law, impracticable morality, and suicidal virtue founded thereon.

Religion to be true, to be religion, must be a *present, living, dynamical, intelligible actuality*; not a bygone speculative abstraction or moral fossil — a specter of the past, beckoning man backwards, encouraging a rejection of the new for the old, and mysteriously pointing at life through the dark portals of death.

The Religion of Science will be the constantly higher and higher law, which knowledge, when harmoniously connected, when organized into a living body of doctrine, as it demonstrably must soon be, will ever clearer and more efficiently reveal and develop, up to the perfection point.

The Government of Science will be the regulation of voluntary action according to the Religion of Science; the direction of progress in consonance with order; the aider, instead of the represser, of human action; and finally, the liberator of voluntary action from all

marriage, which is too often legalized prostitution; the theological phantasm; popular government; the immorality of the Protestant clergy in the United States; supernaturalists; mystery; absolutism; demagogism; slavery; and poverty.

The composition of the final work by Calvin Blanchard which I shall notice was surely a labor of gratitude and love. In this small volume (110 pages) our radical Yankee tried to pay his debt to Thomas Paine, who, it will be recalled, revealed to him the joys of infidelity. The title, which is in itself almost a biography, runs as follows: *The Life of Thomas Paine; Mover of the "Declaration of Independence"; Secretary of Foreign Affairs under the First American Congress; Member of the National Convention of France; Author of "Common Sense," "The Crisis," "Rights of Man," "Age of Reason," etc., etc.; The Man Whose Motto was, "The World is My Country, To Do Good My Religion." Embracing Practical Considerations on Human Rights; Demonstrating that Man Tends Irrepressibly to Actual Freedom; and Showing a Liberty-Aim Connection in the Action of the World's Three Great Author-Heroes, Rousseau, Paine, and Comte* (1860).

In his Introduction, Blanchard takes the stand that certain periods of history have had their author-heroes: for example, Thomas Paine was the author-hero of the American Revolution, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, of the French Revolution, and Auguste Comte, with his *Cours de philosophie positive*, is the hero of the great struggle for human rights and liberty which is now going on. There have been, Calvin adds, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other author-heroes and -heroines, — for instance, Bacon, Locke, Luther, Voltaire, Fourier, Robert Owen, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Frances Wright, — but the writings of none of them "have been quite such textbooks of revolution as those of Rousseau and Paine were, and those of Comte are."

Intermingled with the events of Paine's life, we find in this production some of Blanchard's hobbies: for example, science

Clergymen are aware, Blanchard asseverates, "that the world's old religion is dead, but they mean to prolong its decay to the utmost, in order that they may feed, like carrion crows, on its rotten carcass." And furthermore, the clergy denounce the materialism of the age.

They do not wish to let their dupes know that such men as Humboldt and Comte did not believe in the existence of the extra-almighty pedant whom they seat on the throne of the universe. . . . Comte has mathematically annihilated a God who can have no practical existence to man, together with the supposed foundation of a faith, the further teaching of which can but hold human perfection in abeyance.

The freedom-experiment in the United States, which was strongly encouraged by Thomas Paine, is bound to fail, Calvin holds, unless the aid of art-liberty is invoked. Fortunately for the reader, he defines this panacea:

By art-liberty I mean the practical application of all science and art systemized, as fast as unfolded. The only law which can govern a free state must be discovered; it must be drawn from the whole of science and art, not enacted; human law can no more be enacted than can physical law.¹

And fortunately again, Blanchard tells whence will come the future discoverers of human law:

From the dissecting room, the chemical laboratory, the astronomical observatory, the physician's and physiologist's study; in fine, from all the schools of science and art should human law be declared, instead of being enacted in legislative halls by those who, in every respect besides political trickery, fraud, and "smartness," are perfect ignoramuses.

From my brief presentation of several of Calvin Blanchard's works, I am sure that the reader has come to the conclusion that Calvin was right when he said that in his search for truth he

¹ In none of his works does Blanchard give definite information concerning the principles and the *modus operandi* of his religion and government of science and art which are to save the world from ruin.

LYDIA MARIA CHILD

At the beginning of his article on positivism in *A Treatise on Theism* (1859), Francis Wharton says that in Mrs. Child's *The Progress of Religious Ideas through Successive Ages* (3 vols., New York and London, 1855) "the positive idea of religion is espoused with a coarseness of tone which may at least serve to put the careless reader on his guard against its essential godlessness of spirit."¹ I desire to bring out here the fact that there is no proof whatever of the influence of Auguste Comte on Mrs. Child's once famous work.²

Mrs. Child, who began life as a Unitarian, was gradually freed from accepted creeds by her study of the religions of the world. As early as July 14, 1848, she wrote to her brother, Convers Francis, a Unitarian clergyman and a professor in the Harvard Divinity School: "My book gets slowly on. . . . I am going to tell the plain, unvarnished truth . . . and let Christians and infidels, orthodox and Unitarians, Catholics, Protestants, and Swedenborgians growl as they like."³ Shortly after the publication of her work she wrote to her brother as follows (February 27, 1856):

Concerning theology, I still have a difficulty in seeing eye to eye with you. . . . Is there any basis for a science concerning the nature of the Divine Being, and the relations of human souls with him? What have we for guides into the infinite except faith and aspiration? . . . I am passing through strange spiritual experiences not at all of my own seeking or willing. Ideas which formerly seemed to me a foundation firm as the everlasting hills are rolling away from under

¹ The Reverend Lyman Hotchkiss Atwater, in his article on positivism in the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, January, 1856, p. 63, remarks: "We observe that the popular authoress, Mrs. Child, has just published a huge work on the history of religion, which is strangely recommended by some of our religious journals in the same paragraphs in which they bear witness that she puts the Bible on a level with Confucius."

² Mrs. Child (1802-1880), miscellaneous writer, was born at Medford, Massachusetts. A strong abolitionist, she published in 1833 her *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans*, which is generally regarded as the first antislavery writing by an American.

³ Seth Curtis Beach, *Daughters of the Puritan* (Boston, 1905), p. 109.

Mrs. Child's book, which is merely an attempt at a comparative history of religion, is not so offensive to-day as it seems to have been in the fifties. What the present-day reader objects to in it is not so much the ideas (which are in the main sound enough) as the inadequacy of documentation. Mrs. Child's brother, Convers Francis, and Theodore Parker gave her advice as to her researches, and I can only agree with an opinion already expressed, that the authorities they chose for her were second-rate.¹

That Auguste Comte was among these authorities there is no evidence. His name does not appear in Mrs. Child's "List of books used in the preparation of these volumes," nor is he mentioned or quoted a single time in the entire text. Mrs. Child certainly depended for most of her matter on some of the rationalistic writers of the period, but there is not one word in her works to prove, in spite of the fact that Theodore Parker, who knew the *Cours de philosophie positive*, was her adviser, that she was acquainted with Comte, the positive philosophy, or the Religion of Humanity.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion to be drawn from my examination of the scores of books, pamphlets, and articles discussed or noticed above may be given in a few words. So far, not a single American, either Christian or infidel, has been found who accepted all of Comte's philosophy, polity, and religion. The clergymen, who, according to Harriet Martineau, are "professionally disqualified for judging of the function and prospects of philosophy,"² were, as we have seen, vehement, at times even bitter, in their denunciation of Comte's efforts to free the Occident from the slough of moral, intellectual, and social anarchy into which it was sinking. The college professors, infatuated as they were with their philosophic and metaphysical hobbies, were also

¹ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Contemporaries* (Boston and New York, 1899), pp. 131, 132.

² *Autobiography* (Boston, 1877), II, 122.

II

THE VILLAGE OF MODERN TIMES

1. SOME AMERICAN FADS OF THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Although Auguste Comte's knowledge of America was slight, it must be admitted that when he characterized the United States as the most anarchical country in the Occident, he was not far from the truth. About the middle of the nineteenth century, a period of universal unrest and aspiration, Europe began sending westward a steady stream of emigrants, who brought with them all the intellectual, moral, and social follies of the Old World, which, added to the native stock, soon converted what had previously been a fairly sane land into something like an Eden Musee on a Brobdingnagian scale.

Dr. Thomas Low Nichols,¹ in his remarkable sociological study *Forty Years of American Life* (London, 1864), was of the opinion that freedom from prejudice, disregard of precedents, and love of novelty made Americans ready listeners to every new doctrine, pretended science, and supposed philosophy, especially if it promised the reformation of society and an increase of human happiness.

The country itself [Nichols says] is a new world, newly peopled by its present inhabitants. Its political institutions are novel and experimental. The fusion of various nationalities is making a new

¹Nichols was born at Orford, New Hampshire, in 1815. He began the study of medicine at Dartmouth College, but received his degree in 1850 from the College of the City of New York. He spent some fifteen years (ca. 1840-1855) advocating health reforms and the social experiments of Charles Fourier, Josiah Warren, and John Humphrey Noyes. In 1855 he removed to Cincinnati, Ohio, where for two years he published *Nichols' Monthly*, in which he upheld the doctrines of spiritualism, free love, and the sovereignty of the individual. After the outbreak of the Civil War, he lived in England. He died in France in 1901. He was the author of numerous works on dietetics, hydrotherapy, and the relations of the sexes.

in order to frighten their mother, hit upon the idea of rapping on the floors, walls, doors, and furniture of the family home at Hydesville, New York, and of attributing the disturbances to mischievous spirits. The report of the girls' miraculous powers soon spread, and after public exhibitions in Hydesville, they started on a lucrative career as professional performers and "mediums." Finding their original repertory of rappings too limited, they added to it manifestations which they were confident would appeal to the fellow citizens of Phineas Taylor Barnum: the violent opening and shutting of doors and drawers, the moving or tossing about of furniture and other objects, and, best of all, a code of signals by means of which communication could be established with the presumably supernatural authors of the antics.

The success of the seances of the Fox sisters in the United States and Europe engendered a vast number of "mediums," most of whom spent a large portion of their time in accusing their competitors of fraud and imposture. From the first, scientists frowned on the claims of the spiritualists, and philosophic minds attributed the rapid spread of the craze to the discredit brought on the older theology by skepticism and criticism, and also to the increasing faith in scientific experiments and methods. In 1888 Margaret Fox, then a confirmed inebriate, confessed that the performances of herself and her sisters were fraudulent. On the other hand, Leah, the oldest sister, who seems to have been the inventor of the tricks, maintained to the end that everything in spiritualism was the result of supernatural intervention.¹

The crusade in favor of women's rights, a movement which has had more visible results than spiritualism, also began about 1848, during the wave of reform which from Europe came to the United States, bringing with it a longing for liberty of

¹ See Leah's book, *The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism*, by A. Leah Underhill (New York, 1885). And for what purports to be an exposure of the fraud, see Reuben Briggs Davenport, *The Death-Blow to Spiritualism: Being the True Story of the Fox Sisters* (New York, 1888).

disporting a garment which bore a vague resemblance to the roomy trousers of a bashi-bazouk, and the triumph of the cause seemed at hand. However, as Dr. Nichols informs us, "the attempt on the part of certain American women to assume masculine or semi-masculine habiliments — a movement which received the name of bloomerism from one of its prominent American advocates — was a bold and energetic one, but not successful."¹ So, then, before the Civil War, women did not quite succeed in bringing themselves down to the level of men. It remained for the years following the Great War thoroughly to masculinize them and to clothe them in raiment such as the world had never seen before.

Almost contemporaneously with the fads I have just mentioned, came the doctrine of free love, which, manifesting itself especially among the Perfectionists, of Oneida, New York,² gradually spread until it won the approval of a large number of other people, among whom may be mentioned Dr. Thomas Low Nichols, Stephen Pearl Andrews, and Calvin Blanchard. The portion of the First Report of the Oneida Association which is entitled "Bible argument defining the relations of the sexes in the Kingdom of Heaven" sets forth the principles on which the doctrines of free, or universal, love are based.³ In this remarkable document one becomes acquainted with such subjects as marriage unity, enlargement of heart, special companionships, exclusive appropriation, peculiar partnerships, attraction of love, unsanctified state of the amative passions, affinities of nature or position, omnigamy, and simple and complex marriage. Little wonder that Dr. Nichols wrote in his treatise on marriage:

It is a curious spectacle to observe the differences in faith and practice in this one particular of sexual morality which have sprung out of the bosom of the Christian Church in this nineteenth century: Shakerism with its utter denial and proscription of the sexual rela-

¹ *Forty Years of American Life*, II, 23.

² The Oneida Community was founded by John Humphrey Noyes in 1847.

³ For this report, see Thomas Low Nichols and Mary S. Gove Nichols, *Marriage* (New York, 1854), part I, chap. xv.

middle of the nineteenth century the United States was studded with hundreds of communities seeking religious or social freedom and hoping, by coöperation and the common ownership of property, to revolutionize the economic life of the world and to escape the trials and the hardships, the crime and the poverty of ordinary existence. In 1840, impressed by the turn of events, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote to Thomas Carlyle as follows: "We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform. Not a reading man but has a draft of a new community in his waistcoat pocket. . . . George Ripley is talking up a colony of agriculturists and scholars. . . . One man renounces the use of animal food; and another of coin; and another of domestic hired service; and another of the state; and on the whole we have a commendable share of reason and hope."¹

The majority of the communistic settlements lived only a few years. Among the causes of their failure were the following: dissatisfaction with the leader of the society, and especially inability to find a competent leader after the death of the founder; rebellion against discipline; secession of the younger members; financial difficulties; boredom; and in some of the religious groups, discontent occasioned by excessive narrowness and asceticism.²

2. JOSIAH WARREN

Of all the reformers who came forward in this period with cures for the ills of society, none was more earnest than Josiah

¹ *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1834-1872)* (Boston, 1883), I, 308.

Régis Michaud, referring to the early forties, says in his *La Vie inspirée d'Emerson* (Paris, 1930), p. 134: "C'était la grande époque des phalanstères. Les rêveries de Saint-Simon et de Fourier, en attendant celles d'Auguste Comte, passaient l'eau. L'Amérique était un pays jeune, spacieux, malléable, la terre promise des utopies. C'est là que les visionnaires d'Europe, depuis Rousseau, avaient situé l'âge d'or."

² For scores of other fads of the forties and fifties, see Nichols, *Forty Years of American Life*, *passim*.

which every one should be free to do as he pleased, but always *at his own cost*.

In May, 1827, Warren returned to Cincinnati, where he opened what he called an Equity, or Time, Store — that is, a store in which the merchant's compensation was based on the principle of a just and equal exchange of labor for labor. For example: a customer, John Doe, a bricklayer, enters Warren's store, in which "all goods are marked with the price in plain figures, which is their cost price, plus a nominal percentage to cover freight, shrinkage, rent, etc., usually about four cents on the dollar."¹ John Doe selects his merchandise and pays for it in legal tender. A clock in the store reveals how much time Warren has spent in waiting on his customer, and in return for this service John Doe gives Warren a "labor note," which reads something like this: "Due to Josiah Warren on demand twenty minutes of bricklaying. John Doe." It will be observed that by this system Warren agrees to accept no real profit from the transaction, but only to exchange his labor for the labor of his customer.

Warren's Equity Store was also an employment agency and a market where persons with produce for sale could find purchasers without enriching a middleman. Besides, Warren was a money lender, but certainly not a usurer. He lent money for which he charged no interest; he exacted payment merely for the time required for giving the borrower the money (say five minutes) and for the time spent in receiving it back (say five minutes).

At the end of two years Warren closed his Equity Store in Cincinnati, not because he deemed it a failure, but because he wished to apply his principles — the sovereignty of the individual and cost the limit of price — to all branches of social life in a village where land might be bought at a low figure.

¹ William Bailie, *Josiah Warren — The First American Anarchist* (Boston, 1906), p. 10. For information concerning Warren, I draw largely on this excellent work.

When Warren and Andrews had by their lectures, publications, and "parlor conversations" aroused sufficient interest in the individualistic form of coöperation, they decided to establish another experimental village. And thus came into being the agglomeration which was to be named Modern Times, and which was surely one of the most curious human menageries this planet has ever harbored.¹

3. MODERN TIMES

Early in 1851 Warren and Andrews chose for their experiment a spot on Long Island, on the Long Island Railroad, forty-three miles east of New York City. It must be said that they could not have selected a less promising site. The soil there was sandy, lumber for building was lacking, and in such a deserted place the demand for labor was perforce small. Nevertheless, always optimistic, as reformers should be, the founders of Modern Times were of the opinion that the soil might be rendered suitable for market-gardening, that some invention might make the use of lumber unnecessary, and that factories might be introduced to furnish employment. Warren, who was a dreamer rather than a business man, entrusted such details as the purchase of land and the erection of houses to his newly found associate, Andrews. That the latter performed his duties well is shown by a letter written by Henry Edger to the London *Leader* towards the end of 1851.

After remarking that it was strange that two men, the Frenchman Proudhon and the American Andrews, should on opposite sides of the Atlantic simultaneously discard association and preach the sovereignty of the individual and anarchy, Edger began his account of the founding of Modern Times as follows:

¹ John Humphrey Noyes gives the genealogy from Robert Owen to Modern Times and its offshoots as follows: "Owen begat New Harmony; New Harmony (by reaction) begat Individual Sovereignty; Individual Sovereignty begat Modern Times; Modern Times was the mother of Free Love, the Grand Pantarchy, and the American branch of French Positivism" (*History of American Socialisms* [Philadelphia, 1870], p. 94).

Just so far as a demand is thus created at the new settlement, other industries can be established. A tailor, for instance, a shoemaker, still more a smith and a carpenter, would find in any agricultural district a considerable demand for his services.

Having offered some objections to Warren's principles, Edger continued:

Still, I believe these doctrines, one and all, do constitute (subject to modifications) the solution of the social problem. They alone show how the most complete coöperation . . . can be obtained *without infringement on the most absolute freedom of each individual*. They alone show how the exactions of capital — interest, rents, profits, and land monopoly too — may be got rid of, the masses being able, through this reform, gradually, yet inevitably and quietly, to step out from under the present system, leaving national debts, aristocracies, and all other feudal and commercial nightmares behind. No social reform ever presented so many inducements to its immediate practical execution; for none was ever so easy to set about, none ever interfered so little with private interests, none was ever so pliable and capable of modification to meet all manner of circumstances; for, in a word, none was ever so near the truth.¹

In a second letter dated Brooklyn, New York, 1852,² Edger says that he has just revisited Modern Times, "the sturdy young village," and that it has made great progress since he saw it last. The stunted pines and tough oak brushwood have been cleared away, and the rude log cabins have been replaced by neat and almost elegant cottages, around which grow gardens amid piles of lumber, sand, lime, mortar, bricks, and other materials of the builder's art. In the "unitary residence, the college to be," the village store illustrates the principles of Warren's Equitable Commerce, since in it all goods are sold for what they cost, the storekeeper being paid so much a minute for the time taken up by the customer. The population of the village, Edger says, is now about fifty or sixty souls, among whom is George Stearns, of Lowell, Massachusetts.

¹ London *Leader*, March 27, 1852, p. 299. George Henry Lewes was editor of the *Leader* from 1850 to 1854.

² *Ibid.*, June 8, 1853, p. 52.

the opinion of Dr. Thomas Low Nichols, another resident of Modern Times, concerning the early days of the village.

Disciples came [he declares] from New York and even from Boston. . . . The air was pure; the water, found at a depth of thirty feet in the gravel, soft and delicious. There were no churches, no magistrates. Every one did what was right in his own eyes. The women wore bloomers, or donned the entire male costume. . . . As the sovereignty of the individual was opposed to all artificial, social, or legal restraints, marriages were abolished, and families arranged themselves according to the law of attraction. Those lived together who chose to do so, and people parted without giving any trouble to the courts of common pleas. The right of the law either to unite or separate was denied, and free love was placed in the same category with all other freedom. A man might have one wife, or ten, or more if he could take upon himself the proper cost or burthen; and the same freedom was asserted to women.¹

Elsewhere Dr. Nichols informs us that in Modern Times there were no police or other public officials. People who so desired might voluntarily unite for mutual defense and protection under an individual leader, but these combinations had to be such as would come naturally by the law of demand and supply. One resident, for example, undertook to protect the public by contract, another to carry the mails, and others to supply water and gas. As far as possible, every person was independent of every other, since, according to Josiah Warren, combination is the grave of liberty, and self-protection the right of nature.²

Further information concerning the beginnings of Modern Times is furnished by A. J. Macdonald, a Scotchman by birth, a printer by trade, and a disciple of Robert Owen, who visited the village while collecting material for a book on socialistic experiments in the United States.³ Among the many newspaper clippings gathered by Macdonald is one entitled "A Peep into

¹ *Forty Years of American Life*, II, 41.

² *Ibid.*, II, 39.

³ Macdonald died in 1854, before he could finish his work. John Humphrey Noyes used some of his material in his *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia, 1870). The Macdonald Papers are now in the Yale University Library.

In 1857, six years after the founding of Modern Times, Moncure Daniel Conway visited the village.¹ He was puzzled, he says, concerning the route to follow, "not being sure whether a place where people attended to their own affairs and did without money was to be reached by railway or rainbow." Long Island he found a dreary waste, in which a few fishing villages along the coast, a few farmhouses inland, and a few mansions inhabited by the families of rich New York merchants alone sheltered humanity.² Alighting from the train at Thompson's Station, he walked a mile to Modern Times, where he descried "a cluster of houses standing pure and white under the clear light of the moon." In the village he discovered that no two persons were expected to dress alike, think alike, or act alike; that nothing was in such disrepute as sameness; that nothing was more applauded than variety; and that no fault was more venial than eccentricity. "Certain customs had grown out of the absence of marriage laws. Secrecy was very general, and it was not considered polite to inquire who might be the father of a newly born child, or who the husband or wife of any individual might be."

The village, Conway goes on, consisted of less than a hundred cottages, neat and cheerful, green and white, with vegetable beds and a profusion of flowers. The chief lack was trees; but the fields were afire with barberry and sumach.

The men, in Conway's opinion, showed in their clothing a decided poverty of invention, but the women were "as the

¹ See his article, "Modern Times, New York," in the *Fortnightly Review*, July 1, 1865. — Conway, clergyman, author, and editor, was born in Stafford County, Virginia, in 1832. Brought up a Methodist, he became a circuit-riding preacher in Maryland. At the age of twenty-one he renounced Methodism and entered the Harvard Divinity School. He later became pastor, successively, of the Unitarian Church in Washington, D. C., of the First Congregational Church of Cincinnati, and of South Place Chapel, Finchbury, London. He died in Paris in 1907. He was the author of nearly a hundred books and pamphlets, among which was a life of Thomas Paine.

² The population of Long Island at that time was about 175,000, one-half of which was in and around Brooklyn. The population of the island is now nearly 5,000,000.

Modern Times prospered until 1857, the year of Conway's visit, and then entered a decline, for which several causes may be assigned. In the first place, the soil on which the village was built was, as I have said already, poor, and after homes and stores had been erected, there was no demand for workmen except agriculturalists. Secondly, the manufactures on which the founders had counted were so slow in coming that after six years only a box factory had been established. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Modern Times had but little money, and capital was needed to carry out even the modest plans of Warren and Andrews. Finally, in the very year of Conway's visit, there occurred one of the worst financial panics that the United States had ever experienced. The too rapid building of railroads, reckless speculation, and extravagance caused banks to fail, railways to suspend, business men to go into bankruptcy, and prices to rise, and obliged thousands of men to roam the streets of the cities in search of employment. The effect of these disasters was naturally felt all over the country, and even in such an out-of-the-way village as Modern Times. And then, four years later, came the Civil War, which took men's minds off the sovereignty of the individual, and compelled them to remember that society is after all an association, a combination, which sometimes can be preserved only by force of arms.

Some of the residents of Modern Times, discouraged by the train of adverse circumstances, removed to other places, especially to New York and Boston; others — even certain free-

London, 1904), Conway says (I, 235) that a lady and a gentleman offered him hospitality at Modern Times. "I have idealized this lovely woman," he adds, "and indeed the village in my *Pine and Palm*, but her actual history was more thrilling than is there told of Maria Shelton, and the village appears to me in the retrospect more romantic than my Bonheur." See *Pine and Palm — A Novel* (New York, 1887), chapters XXII ("Bonheur") and XXIII ("Christmas at Bonheur"). On page 236 of the second volume of his *Autobiography*, Conway wrote: "Though few of the residents of Bonheur might have heard of Thelema, the motto of Rabelais's utopian abbey had embodied itself in this American forest village: *Fais ce que voudras*."

would enjoy greater happiness than the outside world, where man fought man for the necessities of life. Everything considered, an impartial observer is forced, I think, to conclude that Warren's principles were excellent rules of conduct for the individual, but that they would never be suitable for mankind in general. Indeed, anarchy will always be an impossible remedy for social ills, and Warren's doctrines fairly earned for him the title of "the first American anarchist."

Even though we admit that from the point of view of social life Modern Times accomplished little, we must not forget that it was in this humble village that Henry Edger began his efforts to convert the New World to positivism. Before 1854 A. J. MacDonald wrote: "Henry Edger, the actual hierarch of positivism, one of the ten apostles *de propaganda fide* appointed by Comte, was called to his great work from Warren's school at Modern Times. He is still a resident of that village, and has attempted within a year or two to form a positive community there. . . ." ¹ And in 1865 Moncure Daniel Conway, reviving the memories of his visit to Modern Times eight years previously, said of Edger: "I can bear witness that [the village] is not without an able preacher of positivism, — one who has studied the philosophy of Comte more thoroughly, and can state it more clearly, than any other man in America." ²

Let us now turn our attention from Modern Times to the crusade for the Religion of Humanity which Henry Edger carried on for a quarter of a century in that curious setting.

¹ John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, p. 94.

² *Fortnightly Review*, July 1, 1865, p. 426.

spondent from his first reading days upwards. Born in England, I always had a far more American heart than an English. Because I drank in republicanism with my mother's milk, I signed my "declaration of intention" within a fortnight of my landing on these shores, with emotions such as those of a foundling recovering a long-lost parent. . . . I reassert what I have so often said to you, that if the real state of things here were fairly set before the masses of Englishmen, ten would emigrate, if they could, for one who now actually comes hither.¹

When Edger arrived in the United States, he intended to join Étienne Cabet's Icarian community at Nauvoo, Illinois, but he changed his mind, and on May 6, 1851, paid his first visit to the village of Modern Times, where he remained off and on until the following August. In the course of this sojourn he made the acquaintance of Josiah Warren and his social doctrines, and of Dr. Thomas Low Nichols, who was at that time an earnest advocate of free love. Later, still in "a dangerous state of skeptical fluctuation," he resided in various places in New York State — in New York City, Williamsburg, and Brooklyn — and then spent five months in the Fourierist North American Phalanx, near Red Bank, Monmouth County, New Jersey. Dissatisfied with Fourierism, he left the Phalanx and lived for several months in the village of Tinton Falls, New Jersey. And finally, in the spring of 1854 he settled in Modern Times, where he stayed nearly all the rest of his life.

That Edger was acquainted with Comte's works before a correspondence between the two men began is proved by the letter he wrote the London *Leader* from Tinton Falls. In this communication, he thanks George Henry Lewes for revealing Comte to him in a series of articles on positivism published in the *Leader* in 1852. Furthermore, he expresses the opinion that Comte alone can solve the great social problem; he also defends the writings of Comte's "second career," which, he

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 632.

1. THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY EDGER AND
AUGUSTE COMTE¹

EDGER TO COMTE

Edger's first letter contains an account of the writer's intellectual and religious training, of his early experiences in the United States, of his settling at Modern Times, and of his conversion to positivism. It runs as follows:

Modern Times, Thompson Station, Long Island, New York,
Juvenal 19, Homer 66² [February 16, 1854.]

My dear Sir:

I have been desiring for some time to communicate with you, in order to express, so far as words can do so, the ever-growing gratitude awakened in my breast by the inestimable instruction derived from your works.

It was to the London *Leader* newspaper, and Mr. Lewes's articles in particular, that I owed my first introduction to positivism. But it is in your works alone that I find a full satisfaction; they alone solve those great moral problems, to the unsettlement of which we owe so much of our misery in this age.

I have myself passed through a most stormy metaphysical transition. All the anarchical doctrines of the day have in turn passed through my brain. Educated in the faith of one of the innumerable Protestant sects, and having my full share of such factitious enthusiasm as these bastard faiths can kindle, — I say factitious, although I certainly recognize underneath this enthusiasm a vein of true, if perverted and disguised, sentiment, social and even humanitarian, — the religion of my childhood and youth ultimately fell beneath the combined force of the spirit of the age and its own inconsistencies, intellectual and still more moral. Of the critical philosophy of the last century I had read little or nothing. In our narrow sects, infidel

¹ Edger's letters — sixteen in number — are in the archives of the Société Positiviste, in Paris. Comte's letters — twelve in number — were first published in Paris in 1889, 8vo, pp. 90, and again in *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à divers* (Paris, 1902-1905), I, 155-213. Inasmuch as Comte's letters are easily accessible, I shall give of them, in translation, only the portions necessary for a full comprehension of Edger's letters.

² For the positivist calendar, see p. 83, n. 3, above.

many charms for me. I had them in view on coming to this country; intending, indeed, at one time to join the French communists at Nauvoo, with whose leader, M. Cabet, I corresponded for a while.¹ Five months I spent at the North American Phalanx,² the dreams of Charles Fourier³ somewhat fascinating me, although conscious of his logical weakness. I thus became practically connected with the village whence this letter is dated, founded by a kind of spontaneous coalition of the débris of many communistic and associative enterprises upon the basis simply of a common doctrine. Although this doctrine is itself anarchical enough, yet the absence of organization, the appeal to a common opinion as the necessary social bond, and the self-reliance demanded by the position in which my neighbors here are placed, especially taken in connection with their almost universal theological emancipation, led me to anticipate a more favorable reception in the course of time for rational conceptions than could be expected in the general society of an ordinary country town either in England or the United States.

I was already embarked in this enterprise when I became acquainted with the doctrines taught by you. The grand scientific renovation promised by the positive philosophy, and the systematization of human conceptions [involved?] ⁴ in it, gained my enthusiastic adherence before I could give up all my chimerical hopes of material

¹ In 1840 Étienne Cabet, of Dijon, published his romance, *Voyage en Icarie*, in which he set forth his communistic ideas. The book aroused so much enthusiasm that Cabet took steps to realize his utopia. In 1847 he bought land in Texas, to which he sent sixty-nine Frenchmen the following year. When he arrived with four hundred more settlers, he discovered that his colonists, finding the climate in Texas unhealthful, had gone to New Orleans. Some of them soon returned to France, while others followed Cabet to Nauvoo, Illinois, a prosperous town which had been abandoned by the Mormons when public opinion drove them to Utah. After establishing his community in its new home, Cabet returned to France. Exiled after the *coup d'état* in 1851, he returned to Nauvoo. For a while agriculture, trades, and manufactures brought prosperity to Icaria, but by 1856 serious dissension arose under Cabet's despotic rule. Deprived of the general directorship of the colony by majority vote, Cabet went to Saint Louis, Missouri, where he died on November 18, 1856. For details concerning him and his interesting experiment, see Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son fondateur, Étienne Cabet* (Paris, 1907).

² The North American Phalanx, the most important and the most successful Fourierite community in the United States, was located near Red Bank, New Jersey, some forty miles south of New York City. It lasted from 1843 to 1856. The labor there was at first agricultural, but later, manufacturing was done on a considerable scale.

³ Concerning Fourier, see *infra*, p. 134, n. 2.

⁴ The manuscript is torn here.

to the Pontifical Fund.¹ But I feel that the one grand need of this age is the philosophical organization you have had the noble courage to institute. I shall regard it as one of the first duties of my life to devote the tithe of all my income to this fund, and the hope of thus serving Humanity will not a little stimulate to energy and perseverance in the practical pursuit to which I have devoted myself. (Je deviens pépiniériste).² M. Ballière, the bookseller,³ undertook to remit to you the above-named sum, which I entrusted into his hands for that purpose about four weeks since.

With profound veneration, permit me, reverend Sir, to tender to you as the first Pontiff of Humanity, my sincere obeisance.

HENRY EDGER.

COMTE TO EDGER

Edger's conversion to positivism gladdened the heart of Comte, who for years had been accustomed to receive letters from men who accepted his philosophy, but rejected the Religion of Humanity. The main points of Comte's reply follow:

19 Aristotle 66 (March 16, 1854).

Your letter shows that you have an energetic, intelligent, tender soul, which, ill-directed heretofore, can accomplish much good in the great renovation reserved for our century. What is your age? Your complete adhesion encourages me in my construction of a new religion. I am pleased that you, although led astray by anarchical utopias, are submissive to the regenerating positive priesthood. The fact that you have felt the influence of my immortal Clotilde assures me that when my life ends the angel who inspired me with the true religion will continue to be invoked by worthy servants of Humanity. I am not surprised that the first avowal of such an association comes from afar, since I foresaw years ago that it would come from the United States, the land of liberty, if its citizens would scorn the oppression of their anarchical *milieu*. With the exception of the noble positivist center which has been formed gradually in Paris, the country in which you are now living is the only part of the Occident where one can practise openly the worship, both public and private, in which our nature seeks within itself the best resources of its moral

¹ The fund established in 1848 for the support of Comte.

² Brentwood, Long Island, is still known for its nurseries.

³ Baillière's bookshop was at 290 Broadway, New York City.

quirers into positivism. I am encouraged to hope even that there is here the germ of a future Church.

This fact has made me the more anxious to write to you again; for, without your knowledge and consent I scarcely feel justified in attempting to expound your doctrines, while the want of an acquaintance with the French language prevents my neighbors from becoming acquainted with them otherwise than through me.¹ I am thus deeply anxious for your commands, and will put you into full possession of the principal circumstances around here, to enable you to furnish them.

I must first mention that the phalansterian notions of Charles Fourier have been much more widely diffused in this country than anywhere in Europe, only with the elimination of the very passional theory upon which all his system is based.² The number of admirers, however, of even this passional theory is very great in the United States. The principal elements of it have been promulgated in various forms throughout certain classes. Popular acceptance it has certainly not met—it could never meet. But the anti-domestic notions involved crop out in all directions and in various forms.

The ardent revolutionary spirits are nearly all led in this direction. The actual domestic demoralization consequent upon the classing of marriage among purely civil contracts, the absence of any noble ideal in it—the least anarchical of American writers treating it as essentially a conventional arrangement for the protection of offspring—tend much to aid the cause of anarchy. Large numbers of women with a good position in society rally around the standard of woman's rights, claiming political and industrial equality with men, demanding freedom of divorce, etc.

¹ In his "Journal," Edger says that, using Comte's *Catéchisme positiviste* as a groundwork, he first expounded positivism publicly on July 1, 1854. "Those present: Clarissa Taylor, Mrs. Hayward, Sarah and Jane Metcalf, Curran Swain, William Metcalf, John Metcalf, I. H. Cook, Mrs. Henry Edger, Henry Swain, Eleanor Blacker, Milton Swain, Abigail Blacker."

² The French socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1837) believed that the practical principle for social reconstruction was coöperation, or united industry. His plan of reorganization was based on the twelve passions of men, to wit: five sensitive (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch); four affective (amity, love, paternity, ambition); and three distributive (cahalistic, alternating, composite). If all the passions are given free play, Fourier maintained, passional attraction will cause a spontaneous formation of social groups, or phalanxes. Each phalanx, composed of about two thousand persons, should occupy a single building (phalanstery), and provide itself with all necessary commodities and amusements. The chief occupations of the phalanx should be agriculture, commerce, manufactures, domestic economy, science, education, art, and government.

rife among socialists generally as to the possibility of a social reorganization based on association, or the direct incorporation of industry without real leaders, and the cognate chimera of the election of all superiors by inferiors.

There is certainly some tendency in these so-called principles to foster the spirit of revolt against all real organization and direction; but then, besides the daily teachings of practical life, — and we have to work very hard here, especially at the outset in clearing our land of the natural growth of underwood, etc., — there seems to me to be a growing tendency to subordination springing up from the mere discussion of these principles themselves; and still more does it seem to me that hereafter the operations of the labor note may be so directed as to favor a real reorganization. (I am supposing in this case the prior possibility of founding a positivist Church). For, these principles, starting from a purely metaphysical point of view, have the especially metaphysical and transitional property of adapting themselves to minds in different stages of development: those but little emancipated conceiving of them in an absolute manner as constituting what their authors and promulgators presumptuously pretend them to be, the real "Science of Society";¹ others, more advanced towards a spontaneous positivism, recognizing in them only a method of social progress, a platform of coöperation for earnest and sincere reformers, while waiting for a true and positive light.

Thus viewed, this Equity movement presents the really great advantage of an assured tolerance. Every conscientious opinion, however opposed to the opinion of others, even of the great majority, meets here with a respect and forbearance unknown elsewhere. I have felt it my duty to foster this spirit carefully, even towards the most anarchical and repulsive doctrines, justifying a resistance either to such teachings, or even the consequent practices, only on the ground universally recognized here, that an "individual's sovereignty" must be "exercised at his or her own cost," so that "when any burden is thrown on another, he is entitled to use any means to throw it from his own shoulders to those of the individual wrongly imposing it." This is said to be "the natural government of consequences," and is supposed to be destined finally to dispense with every other kind of government.

I would not trouble you with so detailed an account of the notions

¹ Stephen Pearl Andrews published Josiah Warren's theories in *The Science of Society* (New York; No. 1, 1851, No. 2, 1852). There were several later editions of the work.

possible retrogression towards obscurantism and superstition, the Catholic Mass might be made to subserve the purposes of positivist worship, as in other places Catholic temples will undergo a parallel transformation.¹ Especially would I desire this for the sake of the music, the only truly religious music I as yet know of, or at least the best, as well as the most available.² The dead languages in which the service is couched would seem to aid the metamorphosis. I have thought that, without any forced denaturalization of the words, a truly positive interpretation might be put upon them, which would make them serve our purpose, at least for the present, very admirably. . . .

Permit me, most reverend Father, again to subscribe myself with profound gratitude and sincere reverence,

Your faithful and devoted disciple

HENRY EDGER.

To M. Comte,
First Supreme Pontiff of Humanity.

COMTE TO EDGER

20 Dante 66 (August 4, 1854).

Modern Times, which you describe so carefully, constitutes the full development of Occidental anarchy.³ I am glad that you are not frightened by it. You have appreciated well the seed of reorganization in that bizarre mental *milieu*, the cultivation of which is reserved for you. Like you, I prefer the complete and systematic individualism of your village to vague socialism. I share your hopes concerning the possibility of finding in Modern Times the nucleus of a true positivist Church. We must regard as incurable only those men who are without heart and character.

In the crusade you are undertaking, feeling will be your best ally,⁴

¹ Concerning the transformation of Catholic churches into positivist temples, see p. 84, above.

² In Comte's scheme, all the arts — poetry, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, song, etc. — are employed in the glorification of the Great Being, Humanity.

³ Inasmuch as Comte thought that the individual is nothing, and that society is everything, he was bound to be opposed to the sovereignty of the individual of Modern Times.

⁴ In Comte's "first career," when he wrote the *Cours de philosophie positive*, he believed in the superiority of the mind over the heart; in his "second career," when he composed the *Système de politique positive* and the *Catéchisme positiviste*, he thought that the feelings should dominate the intellect. The change in his attitude was due, of course, to his love for Clotilde de Vaux.

I have invited my friend H. A. Ewerbeck, now residing in Highland, Madison County, Illinois, to fraternize with you. He is a German doctor, about your age. Although not a positivist, he is acquainted with our doctrine. You may help him to get out of the German fog in which he is now lost.¹

EDGER TO COMTE

In his third letter, Edger suggested that it might be worth while to create positivist monasteries, in imitation of those of Catholicism. In addition, he gave the High Priest of Humanity details concerning his direct and indirect propaganda at Modern Times. The direct included readings, translations, original writings, and circulation of manuscripts; the indirect was made up of musical instruction, lessons in the French language, and the formation of a positivist library. He also told of his efforts to win over his anarchical neighbors, especially the women, all of whom, because of their interest in spiritualism and other absurd practices, were recalcitrant to his teachings.

Modern Times, Thompson Station, Long Island,
Matridi, 27th Descartes 66 [November 3, 1854.]

Very reverend Father:

. . . My first duty is to inform you of a resolution formed under the impulsion of my first complete conversion to religious positivism, now more than a year ago. . . . It appeared to me that my case must be a very frequent one now, and one always liable to recur. Men would ever be liable to be thrown out of the ranks, as I had been,

masterpiece of *human* wisdom, and therefore he borrowed widely from it. He esteemed especially the services of the Church to civilization, its organization, and some of its practices and teachings. For the influence of Catholicism on Comte's system, see Charles de Rouvre, *Auguste Comte et le catholicisme* (Paris, 1928).

Comte's attitude towards the Church was merely a phase of his attitude towards all ideas and institutions of the past, whether political, economic, ethical, religious, or scientific. In his view, all such ideas and institutions sprang from humanity, and so should be used by positivism, the chief aim of which is the betterment of mankind.

¹ In the Appendix to the present volume, I shall give some details concerning Ewerbeck, a Prussian who sojourned in the United States in 1853 and 1854.

a period of some six or seven weeks, about the date of my last letter, I devoted myself quietly to the translation of the *Catéchisme*, so far succumbing, however, to surrounding conditions as to rob it of its catechetical form and entitle it "The Positivist Manual"; in every other respect, however, faithfully transcribing, to the best of my power, its every sentiment and thought. Each chapter (*entretien*), as soon as completed, I put into circulation in manuscript.¹

I am also circulating, in manuscript, translated portions of the "Discours préliminaire," and also of Dr. Littré's *Conservation, révolution et positivisme*.² I am about to add a translation of my Brother Lonchamp's admirable *brochure*,³ which, happily, I received some two months since.

I ventured also to read an original paper on "The Possibilities of Equitable Commerce" to a small number of my neighbors. In the outset of this paper I said: ⁴ "To construct human society by entirely isolating its elements; to disconnect human interests, and yet retain a mutual coöperation; to organize industry without effective direction; to abolish all mutual confidence, even in dispensing with its direct necessity, and yet retain human happiness; to establish freedom on the ruins of all human ties, even the domestic: are just so many feats, not impossible only, but absolutely self-contradictory. But to establish a profound and inalterable respect for the humanity incarnated in each individual; so to organize the coöperation of the whole as to surround each with indispensable and yet all-sufficient guarantees; to transform industrial direction, by our cost principle or otherwise, from an immoral personal privilege into a social function; to offer the widest field to the exercise of human confidence, and yet at the same time protect the victims of the breach of that confidence; to purify and ennoble and thus fortify all human ties by connecting them with a supreme ideal voluntarily accepted

¹ The catechism in question was Comte's *Catéchisme positiviste, ou Sommaire Exposition de la Religion universelle, en onze entretiens systématiques entre une femme* [Clotilde de Vaux] *et un prêtre de l'Humanité* [Auguste Comte] (Paris, October, 1852). Edger's translation was never published. Richard Congreve's English translation appeared in London in 1858.

² "Discours préliminaire sur l'ensemble du positivisme," in the first volume of the *Système de politique positive* (1851), pp. 1-399.—Émile Littré's *Conservation, révolution et positivisme*, 8vo, pp. xxxiii, 335, was published in Paris in 1852.

³ See p. 137, n. 2, above.

⁴ It will be observed from the extracts which follow that Edger was seeking to impregnate Equitable Commerce and the doctrine of the sovereignty of the individual with positivism.

ing, in French, the *Catéchisme*. My own experience leads me to hope that I shall be able, eschewing all the absurdities of grammarians and system-mongers,¹ to make my class read the *Catéchisme* intelligently in a very short time, especially as they have the "Manual" before mentioned to study first.

I am also forming, in connection with my circulating manuscripts, a Positivist Library.² But poverty makes this a slow work.

This, then, is the little all I am as yet able to undertake for the Faith that has done everything for me.

I have now to enquire, in regard to a practical point, whether, in building residences for ourselves, it will be necessary to place the houses in any particular attitude as regards the points of the compass, or whether they will be sufficiently adapted to our worship if they stand due north and south. All our present streets and avenues stand square with the meridian — the avenues running due east and west, and the streets at right angles to them. But our building operations are as yet scarcely begun.

For myself, I have to acknowledge with deep gratitude the eminent kindness extended to me in encouraging me to hope some day for the sacred office of the priesthood. But, my Father, I am so entirely incompetent, and not only in regard to preparations, especially mathematical, but also and chiefly in habits of body and mind, that I dare hardly cherish such a hope, even after your paternal encouragement. So many duties seem to demand my time that I know not when I could accomplish the indispensable preparations. . . .³

It would be a very great pleasure and consolation to me if it were permitted me to have a correspondent in France, among our brethren having time to make me acquainted every now and then with the progress and prospects of our cause. I saw an account in the newspapers of some proceedings of persons calling themselves positivists at Lyons some time back, in regard to which I felt deeply anxious for correct information. Moreover, being mainly connected myself

¹ Edger is here, as often, voicing Comte's ideas.

² The Bibliothèque positiviste, or Bibliothèque du prolétaire au dix-neuvième siècle, a list of books chosen by Comte for positivist proletarians to read, comprises 150 volumes, as follows: literature (prose and poetry), 30 volumes; science, 30 volumes; history, 60 volumes; philosophy, ethics, and religion, 30 volumes. Comte's purpose in drawing up this course of reading was to enhance regard for the productions of some of the greatest representatives of humanity. Although his choice of books was good for the time (1851), a considerable number of them, especially in science, are now antiquated.

³ Edger has in mind particularly the required mathematical and scientific education.

For the needs of positivism, I can appoint, as special and temporary representatives, disciples who will act as my substitutes on important occasions. However, do not let your fear of not attaining the priesthood diminish your zeal. You must continue to devote your energies to the propagation of positivism.

The so-called positivist meeting at Lyons was merely the creation of a journalist's imagination.

Lonchampt will be glad to correspond with you.

You desire information concerning edifices. The positive religion prescribes only for temples and private oratories, the axes of which must be everywhere directed towards Paris.

EDGER TO COMTE

Edger, more and more submissive to the authority of the Supreme Pontiff of Humanity, exhibited deep gratitude for Comte's advice. About December 1, 1854, he had officially founded the Positivist Society of Modern Times,¹ and he felt that he now needed more definite instructions. Although he had succeeded in making one convert to positivism, he was still vexed by the attitude of the emancipated women around him, and also by the increasing spread of spiritualism. The certainty that his unworthiness would prevent him from becoming a priest of Humanity did not discourage him. On the contrary, he studied diligently, in order to render himself capable of giving his children a positivist education. These points, as well as a request for information concerning the sacrament of presentation, form the subject-matter of the letter printed below.

Modern Times, Thompson, L. I., New York,
Phædrus Thursday, 18 Homer 67 [February 15, 1855.]

To M. Comte,

Grand Priest of Humanity.

Most reverend and very dear Father:

The gratitude inspired in my breast by the revelation of our sublime Faith grows with time, and increases with each new experience of my life. . . .

¹ This information is given in Edger's "Journal."

For myself, I have regarded it, since my final conversion to positivism, as having a great social mission in this country as the final dissolvent of theologism. According to it, any number of persons sitting round a common table, with a "medium" among them, will presently be put into communication with the disembodied spirits of the dead, who, moreover, work miracles, healing the sick, etc. The absurdity and puerility of the means of communication adopted by these supposed spirits — raps on the table, or "tips," or convulsive motions of the limbs of some of the "circle" — seem only to help the propagandism. That this belief is essentially an insanity is an opinion I have not hesitated to express; and those around me who are enquiring into positivism generally adopt it. But those affected by this mania seem most often to become hopelessly incurable. . . .

But still, when the subjective nature of all the phenomena thus elicited becomes evident to the popular mind, as must be the case at the farthest with the next generation, it can hardly help also recognizing that the same character necessarily attaches to all supernaturalism.

The position to which Your Reverence summons me possesses for my heart most powerful attractions. If devotedness is a pleasure, it is a pleasure heightened by abnegation. To be permitted to serve our Holy Faith, and yet retain a position of modest subordination is the highest privilege I could demand — unless, indeed, it were that moral amelioration to which a more lofty spiritual ambition might tend to urge. Would that I could have the satisfaction, ere my life were over, of bowing in person before a spiritual superior upon these irreligious shores!

On the other hand, the impossibility of ever becoming a priest not only is no discouragement to me, but in no wise diminishes the ardor with which I devote my leisure (considerably more abundant in winter than in summer) to theoretical preparations. Not only is the study of our dogma apt, when once we become truly religious, to render us more and more so, but it must surely add to our power to serve our adorable Goddess¹ and our Holy Church. Moreover I have a son nearly eleven years old, and I cannot but be pre-eminently anxious to bestow upon my own children an education as nearly normal as possible.²

My translation of the *Catéchisme* was completed before the end

¹ That is, Humanity.

² In Edger's letters, the word "normal" generally means "in conformity with the principles of positivism."

the relation between employer and employed, and the consequent stability of one portion of the income of the workman. Finally, I point to the Religion of Humanity as the only power capable of effecting such a solution. . . .

I have to inquire in regard to the sacrament of presentation, how soon after birth it ought to take place; whether at this day it is necessary or desirable to limit ourselves — and whether as to both sexes — to the names included in our Calendar; whether the annual festival of our presented children will fall on their own birthdays or on the day of their principal patron saint; and finally, whether the sacrament of presentation could be desirably celebrated where a truly religious and completely positivist godfather and godmother could not be found.¹

It has seemed to me that the celebration of our domestic sacraments would be eminently efficacious as a means of propagande, especially in rigidly subjecting them to the full force of hierarchical and sacerdotal conditions.²

I have ventured also to encourage my fellow disciples here to hope that we, like all the other local nuclei of positivism, might obtain some faint reflection at least of the developments of the public worship³ that may take place in our religious center.⁴ Moreover I have also hoped that the present year would witness some decisive progress in this respect.

With profound respect and gratitude, humbly saluting Your Reverence,

His devoted disciple
HENRY EDGER.

COMTE TO EDGER

15 Aristotle 67 (March 12, 1855).

The positivist Church which you are going to found in the most anarchical community in your anarchical country will demonstrate the power of our Faith in regenerating revolutionaries, although, as I

¹ The sacrament of presentation corresponds more or less to the Christian baptism.

² The nine domestic sacraments are as follows: presentation, initiation, admission, destination, marriage, maturity, retirement, transformation, and incorporation.

³ Cf. the *Système de politique positive*, IV, 131: ". . . le culte public, où l'Humanité se trouve directement adorée."

⁴ That is, in Paris.

EDGER TO COMTE

Edger's letters multiplied as he plunged more deeply into the Religion of Humanity, and his language gradually became filled with the technical jargon of the *Catéchisme positiviste* and the *Système de politique positive*. His handwriting, in the beginning full and large, began to resemble the small, clear writing of the High Priest of Humanity, and even his letter paper, from large sheets at first, slowly approached the small size of the Master's paper.

In his next letter to Comte, his spiritual director and confessor, Edger told about his own private worship, both personal and domestic, and about his design of enlarging his log cabin so that he might add to it a family oratory. He also made known his desire to celebrate the sacrament of presentation for his fifth child, recently born, and asked Comte's advice concerning names for the infant. And finally, he discoursed at length on his only real disciple, an Englishman named John Metcalf, and on Metcalf's family, which was later to become the chief foe of positivism in Modern Times.

Modern Times,

Godfrey Sunday,¹ 14 Charlemagne 67 [July 1, 1855.]

Most reverend and very dear Father:

. . . The pressure of my temporal duties at this season of the year has made it impossible to write again to Your Reverence at an earlier period, although I have much instruction to seek. May I be permitted with all humility to detail to Your Reverence, as my

with abstract wealth, with values instead of commodities, is superior to the others. Banking, Comte decreed, will supply the members of the central government of the five hundred industrial republics into which the world is to be divided. The supreme directory of each republic will be formed of three socially-minded bankers, who will have complete control of the political management and of the foreign policy of the state; and they will exercise both legislative and executive powers.

So, then, Comte's civil government is wholly capitalistic, since the proletarians, or workingmen, have no part in it.

¹ Named in honor of Godefroy de Bouillon (ca. 1058-1100), one of the leaders of the First Crusade, and the first Latin ruler of Jerusalem.

separated from me by the Atlantic Ocean, already half subjective) runs naturally into a sort of review of my own past life, regarded as undergoing from stage to stage the holy religious influences of her whom I can so profoundly adore.¹ It has occurred to me that in the effusion now to follow, in which I shall use a different measure, and will endeavor to add the further elaboration of rhyme, I would invoke a special protection against the assaults of each one of the seven personal instincts.² This conception, moreover, suggested further that the prayers for each day in the week might in the private and personal worship be devoted to the purification of these seven instincts, one specially on each day from Monday (nutritive instinct) to Sunday (vanity).

The development of the personal and individual side of our holy and blessed Religion has almost from the first seemed to me of very eminent importance. If I do not mistake the spirit and doctrines of our Faith, much of this development must arise from the spontaneous coöperation of the laity. And if this be so, oh how sweet a task is thus devolved upon us little ones of the flock!

In domestic worship, we cannot in my little family make much progress as yet.³ Our material position, in regard to residence, is very indifferent. We have but two small chambers, incapable even of resisting the violence of the weather. The rain and snow penetrate our roof. My wife has no domestic comfort or convenience. And our family numbers four children. So that I feel it to be my duty to procure, if possible, more accommodation before next winter. And I am the more willing to have an addition built to our little cabin because it would enable me to consecrate a portion of our residence to the worship of our Goddess.⁴ The construction of a family oratory, even in one modest proletary residence, would be a homage to our Faith which I would fain hope might not be without result in

¹ The Maternal Angel was, of course, Edger's mother, who was residing at that time in England. Subjective existence is that after death; objective, that during lifetime.

² These instincts are as follows: nutritive, sexual, maternal, military, and industrial instincts, and pride and vanity.

³ The chief feature of domestic worship is the observance of the nine social sacraments (see p. 150, n. 2, above), solemn ceremonies by which the Religion of Humanity sanctifies the great periods of private life by bringing them into distinct connection with public life. Administered by the positivist priesthood when the recipient enters a new phase of existence, the sacraments impress on all persons present the sense of social relationship which the new phase entails.

⁴ Humanity.

upon which our Religion is based. But, more engrossed by material anxieties, he has never followed up with corresponding earnestness his study of our Religion, and is perhaps still further hampered by the want of feminine sympathy in it. For, though his sisters were also much interested in the positive philosophy, and have, moreover, during all last winter, been making a constant study of the *Catéchisme*, although perhaps principally as a means of acquiring the French language, yet they also seem to stumble at the practical development of our Religion.

But I am inclined to suspect that their principal hindrance arises from an anomalous relation existing in their family. An unfortunate lady, by name Mrs. Hayward, who was many years ago separated from her husband, without any fault, as far as I can learn, on her own part, has almost ever since been residing in the Metcalf family as an adopted sister. (They are all natives of England, and have been in this country about nine years). This lady, however, assumes an attitude more consistent with the position of a parent, at least towards the two sisters. She habitually speaks of the house and the garden and all their other material possessions as hers. Evidently inflated with an ambition for display and material pre-eminence, it cannot but be that our feminine doctrine is very distasteful to her,¹ although her intelligence, which is above the average, extorts from her a degree of respect for our Faith, while the social position of the family here leads them to desire an intimacy with mine.

Her attitude, therefore, towards the elder brother, William Metcalf, spontaneously partakes of the conjugal character, although I am not at all in a position to judge that the undisguised tenderness sub-

¹ As early as 1819, in his correspondence with his friend Valat (*Lettres d'Auguste Comte à M. Valat (1815-1844)* [Paris, 1870], pp. 85-87), Comte held that woman's position in society should be improved, and later, in his social reconstruction, women play a primary rôle. They are to be excluded from public action, it is true, but they are to do things more important. As Comte puts it, their domain is the home, and they are to serve by perfecting men. To fit them for their functions, they are to be thoroughly educated, and are not to be allowed to engage in extra-domestic labors. The family, which is the social unit in Comte's system, exists in order that the influence of woman may be carried to the highest degree of cultivation. Superior in the power of affection, and more able to keep both intellectual and active powers in subordination to feeling, women are formed as the natural intermediaries between Humanity and men. Every woman should not only exert a beneficent influence on every man, but every man should be placed under the moral tutelage of guardian angels,—mother, wife, and daughter,—who must answer for him to Humanity, and unite him with the past, the present, and the future.

the worship of our Sainte Clotilde; and it will one day be much assisted when we shall be able to procure an image of her to whom we are so infinitely bound and indebted." Again: "If we do not live to see much accomplished in our lifetime, we are indeed repaid by the thought that we shall be immortalized, unworthy as I feel and unequal to assistance in this great and noble work. I am determined not to stop short of anything that is possible." — "Oh what treasures have we, dear friend, in the works of the older Catholic Divines! The sound wisdom and full heart expressed in Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, with a foreshadowing of the eternal truth, which he had, is what very few can appreciate or understand; it was reserved for us positivists to enjoy. Can we express gratitude enough for these privileges? May it inspire me to acts, so as to deserve them!" — "When on my knees in the Catholic Church, the bell ringing for prayers, or sweet music accompanying them, my mind has passed from one type of Humanity to another, and I have said in the fullness of my heart, 'It is thee, a woman, to whom I will pay homage, it is thee whom I will adore.' " — "The honor you propose to me to become godfather of your infant filled my heart to overflowing; not only from personal sympathy for you, but in being engaged in the first sacrament of our blessed Religion celebrated in this part of the world." — "I send you an engraving of Raphael's Madonna. I have a similar one for myself, so that we can both daily contemplate this beautiful image, and our souls may blend together in one common worship of Humanity." ¹

I cannot help feeling assured that the beloved disciple whose heart dictated the foregoing sentences will be satisfactory to Your Reverence as the godfather of our dear little infant daughter. But, unhappily, the only lady whom we have been able to invite to become godmother is the very Mrs. Hayward above mentioned. She has not yet concluded to accept such an office; but, while I took care to urge the serious responsibilities involved, and point out that such an acceptance was tantamount to a public confession of our Faith, I do not think she will finally decline it. Whether it will be possible for Your Reverence to admit her to so sacred an office is another question. . . .

In regard to names, this difficulty arises. We know almost nothing of the saints in our Calendar, nor have we any readily accessible means of acquiring further knowledge of them. But may we not

¹ An image of the Madonna was to be used by positivists as a representation of Humanity.

extracts from his letters which you cite please me because they show that the affinity of positivism and Catholicism is appreciated by true believers. I am not surprised that religious souls like you and Metcalf, who have escaped from the aridity of Protestantism, should seek in Catholic churches the provisional equivalent of positivist temples, and should develop there the tendency of the Virgin to replace Humanity.¹

I have finished my *Appel aux Conservateurs*, which indicates especially the holy league of Catholicism and positivism.² I hope that you will enter into relations with the Jesuits, who are, I suppose, the principal directors of Catholicism in America. Their successes prepare the triumph of our cause, since the conversion of Protestants to Catholicism is the best preliminary to their conversion to positivism.

The importance which you and Metcalf attach to the daily positivist worship shows the plenitude of your regeneration.

You should provide a better domicile for your wife.

The distinguished artist Antoine Étex left Paris for New York City on June 5.³

EDGER TO COMTE

Many are the topics discussed by Edger in the letter which follows: his composition of a number of fetishist prayers to be used in his domestic worship; the joy he derived from reading the *Imitation of Christ*; a week spent in New York City with

(January 15, 1856), Comte wrote: "En même temps que le positivisme perfectionnait son culte domestique au sein de la métropole universelle, son efficacité religieuse commençait à se manifester parmi les plus anarchiques de tous les Occidentaux. D'après une délégation spéciale, j'ai pu récemment conférer, à travers l'Atlantique, le premier sacrement social à la nouvelle fille qu'un couple régénéré vient de donner à l'Humanité. Grâce au zèle continu d'un éminent apôtre, notre naissante église américaine a déjà pris une attitude décisive, surtout depuis qu'elle s'est enrichie d'un noble prolétaire, au centre des divagations protestantes et de l'agitation mercantile" (*Synthèse subjective* [Paris, 1856], I, xlv).

¹ As time went on, Comte became more and more pleased with Edger and Metcalf. In his letters to European positivists he cannot praise them too highly.

² This work appeared in Paris in August, 1855.

³ Antoine Étex (1808-1888), sculptor, painter, and architect, at first seemed in a fair way to become a thorough positivist. In February, 1853, however, he wrote Comte that a religion without God seemed to him impossible. Concerning his defection, see the *Revue Occidentale*, September 1, 1888, p. 210.

our regimen, and which form the chief obstacle to my ever attaining a competency for the positive priesthood.

A fortnight ago I spent a week in New York. This was the first time J. Metcalf and myself had met since he left this place. The sweet communion of soul we enjoyed together, not only in the French Catholic Church and in our private interviews, but in mingling with general society, was very beneficial to me. I feel sometimes a degree of spiritual compression in being always surrounded by persons whose eccentricities approach towards insanity. We even enjoyed very greatly a Sunday afternoon jaunt into the country, upon a steamboat, surrounded mostly by European proletaries; and on our way to regain the vessel after a pleasant walk, entered a German "Lager-Bier Salon," observing with great satisfaction the geniality of social intercourse prevailing among these real working-men, who with their wives and families made of their Sunday a holiday, and yet far better cultivated their souls than the grim and calculating attendants at conventicles and so-called churches, whose narrow faiths had spread a gloom over our early days.¹

But by far the greatest happiness resulting to me from this visit to New York was the opportunity it gave me, quite unexpectedly, of gazing upon that sacred picture wherein the venerable form of our Great High Priest is presented to us under the guardianship of his three incomparable angels.² After once seeing this unparalleled tableau, no Christ that ever fell under my eyes would seem to me worthy of any place upon my altar; while assuredly our divine and adored Mater Dolorosa³ must utterly efface all others from every imagination capable of appreciating spiritual glory. And while our chiefest Saint, our veritable Madonna, Vergine Madre, Figlia del tuo Figlio,⁴ object of our devoutest prayers, remains in the background, — for surely she who reposes upon the Mother's bosom can be no other than our ever-blessed and glorious Clotilde, — overshadowed even,

¹ Again Edger is trying to please Comte, according to whom the main work of modern society is industrial; and so the case to be considered in the regeneration of society is that of the proletarians, who will preponderate during the positivist era.

² A steel engraving of Étex's painting of Comte and his three guardian angels. For a reproduction of this work, see the frontispiece of the present volume.

³ Comte's mother, Rosalie Boyer.

⁴ The "veritable Madonna" is Clotilde de Vaux. "Vergine Madre, Figlia del tuo Figlio," "Maiden and mother, daughter of thy son," is the first verse of Saint Bernard's prayer to the Virgin Mary in canto XXXIII of Dante's *Paradiso*. Cf. Comte, *Système de pol. pos.*, IV, 556: ". . . je proclame chaque matin, d'après les deux sublimes interprètes du moyen âge, 'Vergine Madre, Figlia del

played towards her mother a tender devotedness that would have done credit to a positivist's child; while on the other, she exhibited a holy resistance to anarchical influences that pressed upon her from all sides. Her father, residing in Boston, two hundred miles distant, and visiting this place twice a year, had considerable influence in it, as a well-known and active revolutionary (socialist, atheist, and now spiritualist), and as being at once of a stirring disposition, and withal kindly and sociable. To the utterly anarchical tendencies thus impressed were superadded all that naturally sprang from having a lover young, thoughtless, and full of disorderly notions. But, in spite of all, this gentle girl remained true, and stood her ground against the entire circle of her friends and acquaintances, yet acting with a prudence and suavity that won the hearts of all. Her death was a heavy blow and a great discouragement to me. Of her conversion to positivism, at the ripe moment, I never felt a doubt. And her influence would have been worth a great deal to our cause within her own locality. I felt, therefore, and my friend John Metcalf shares in this view, that she really furnished us, notwithstanding her tender age, with an admirable moral type. And when I saw her buried by the spiritualist friends of her parents, I felt that her memory belonged to us, and that her worship, developed first personally among us who knew her, might afterwards be made an aid to our propagande in case she could ultimately be elevated into a Local Saint by our final sacrament.¹

My tract embodying our Industrial Constitution has been entirely rewritten. But I still felt that it did not exactly meet the case. A briefer but more comprehensive statement was needed first. Moreover the part relating to merely local matters I wanted to make more pointed. Accordingly I have written quite a short paper (some 24 pp., 12mo.) entitled *Modern Times, the Labor Question, and the Family*, which I propose to print immediately, the manuscript being already out of my hand.² In this, the local portion is partly a defense of our village here against calumnies frequently reiterated by the press

¹ The ninth, and final, social sacrament is incorporation, — that is, a judgment pronounced by the priesthood on the merits of the defunct seven years after death. The reward of good Christians is heaven; that of good positivists is incorporation into Humanity, which, according to Comte, admits only the dead who are worthy of surviving. Unworthy human beings Comte calls parasites and producers of dung.

Members of the Blacker family still reside in Brentwood, Long Island.

² This pamphlet was printed at Modern Times in 1855. Edger gives here a satisfactory account of its contents.

spiritualism, and everywhere pointing out the positive side of the corresponding agitation. Everywhere a true instinct, a spontaneous desire for a real renovation, underlies the modern sophisms. Seizing hold of this, and seeking to lead it up gradually to an appreciation of its true satisfaction, the sophistical solution I would oppose mainly by contrast with the real one, making no negative criticism without indicating at once the true principle that is to replace the delusion destroyed. . . .¹

May I beg Your Reverence for an elucidation in regard to our sacred list of books? I cannot distinguish the works of Walter Scott by the French titles, particularly *L'Officier de la fortune* and *Les Puritains*.²

With profound veneration and gratitude, humbly saluting Your Reverence,

His devoted disciple
HENRY EDGER.

To M. Comte,
First Grand Priest of Humanity.

COMTE TO EDGER

26 Descartes 67 (November 2, 1855).

You must give up your astrolatric prayers until I promulgate more definite instructions concerning the incorporation of fetishism into positivism.

I am touched by the emotions you felt when you saw the reproduction of Étex's picture in New York City.

I agree with you and John Metcalf: we should be pleased with the defection of the haughty godmother, Mrs. Hayward, who does not appreciate the glorious future reserved for women by positivism. I give you free rein in the choice of a godmother to take her place.

I regret the death of Miss Blacker, and I sanction your private adoration of her. But I think that the question of public adoration will require further study.

¹ One of Comte's favorite maxims was "On ne détruit que ce qu'on remplace," which he characterized as "la plus profonde sentence politique du dix-neuvième siècle" (*Catéchisme positiviste*, p. viii). This maxim is to be found in the *Œuvres politiques* of Napoléon III (II, 266), but C. G. Higginson, in an article entitled "Les Maximes d'Auguste Comte" (*Revue Occidentale*, September 1, 1893, p. 309), attributes it to Danton.

² *L'Officier de la fortune* is *The Legend of Montrose*, and *Les Puritains* is *Old Mortality*. The "sacred list of books" is Comte's *Bibliothèque positiviste* (see p. 144, n. 2, above).

ysis of the lower extremities. And the most melancholy result of his disorders was his horrible prostitution of the holy and sublime institution of matrimony, since, after his marriage, he continued to frequent women of easy virtue. If at any time, he remarks, his truly estimable wife has seemed to shackle rather than aid his progress, such an outcome must be attributed solely to his own deplorable errors.

Edger adds that he has lost all confidence in Dr. Curtis, "not only on account of the quackery of his homeopathic theory," but because of the evident moral character of his own malady. He adds also that he fears he can never meet the requirements of the positivist regimen of chastity, and that, because of his moral weakness, both his industrial and spiritual careers have been blasted.

After some details concerning the positivist tracts he is preparing, he says:

But the work on which my heart most delighted to expend all my energies was the collection of the memorials of our most blessed Saint scattered throughout the *Positive Polity*, including, besides the dedication and final invocation, the philosophical letter on social commemoration, and the whole of *Lucie* in the original French, to be concluded by a summary of the positive feminine and domestic doctrine.¹ I thought such a work would constitute the best possible preparation for the study of the *Catéchisme*. . . .

The institution of the Typographical Fund is another profound

¹ The dedication of the *Système de politique positive* (I, i-xxi) is addressed "A la sainte mémoire de mon éternelle amie, Madame Clotilde de Vaux (née Marie), morte, sous mes yeux, le 5 avril 1846, au commencement de sa trente-deuxième année." The final invocation (IV, 545-556) is in honor of Comte's "Noble et tendre patronne." The "Lettre philosophique sur la commémoration sociale" (I, xxxiv-xxxix) was composed for Clotilde, "au sujet de sa fête."

Lucie (I, xxiii-xxxiii) is an autobiographical epistolary *nouvelle* by Clotilde de Vaux. Comte calls it "cette touchante nouvelle, dont la principale situation caractérise essentiellement la fatalité conjugale de l'infortunée Clotilde" (I, xxii), by which he means that Lucie, the wife of a condemned criminal, cannot obtain a divorce and wed Maurice, the man she loves. In the end, Lucie dies of sorrow, and Maurice commits suicide.

Although *Lucie* and *Wilhelmine*, the novel Clotilde was writing when she died, are mediocre productions, her correspondence with Comte shows that when she forgot "literature" she could pen prose of the highest merit.

whom our deference is complete. But we both want sacerdotal instructions as to the course we should pursue in this matter.

An intermarriage, with all the formalities required by our own Holy Church in such cases, would be a satisfaction to the hearts of both of us. It would no doubt give rise to contacts between myself and some of the Catholic clergy. . . .

I have yet another subject on which to seek for directions from Your Reverence. The little tract, *Modern Times*, with which I now feel so dissatisfied, seems to have finally dissipated, or at least aided the growingly manifest realities in dissipating, almost the whole of the chimerical expectations formerly centering in this spot. I want now to see more clearly what direct, practical ameliorations may be substituted in the place of these delusive schemes, as the aim around which the efforts of my neighbors may rally. . . .

The social *non-employment*, so to speak, of the American rich is certainly a state of oppression, and I believe many of them feel it. Besides, the rich in this country are generous to an extreme. Many a man comes forward with all his wealth to devote himself to some scheme of supposed social benefit. I think, therefore, that it would not be difficult to find a rich American to whom the foundation of a normal agricultural domain, with its normal village, and the consequent elevation of his own family into the future patriciate,¹ and

¹In Comte's system there are four chief groups of citizens, to wit: the priesthood (intellectual), women (affective), and the patriciate, or capitalists, and the proletariat, or workingmen (active). In the positivist era, the patricians were to be numerically as follows: 2000 bankers, 100,000 merchants, 200,000 manufacturers, and 400,000 agriculturalists (*Système de pol. pos.*, IV, 307).

Because, in his opinion, private enterprise is the most efficient form of industrialism, Comte believed in the social utility of the concentration of riches in the hands of a limited number of men.

Wealth, which, in the positivist view, consists, besides direct wealth, of the instruments of production, is a collective product belonging to society, to which all the workers of the past and the present have contributed. The duties of the patricians, who are merely the guardians and administrators of wealth, not the absolute masters of it, are, first, to preserve this common treasure from deterioration through neglect or incapacity, and to transmit it, with improvement and augmentation, to future generations, and, secondly, to distribute it in the proper quantity and proportions among the laboring classes, whose work they will direct. At all times the patriciate and the proletariat must work without conflict for the good of Humanity.

It is clear that in Comte's scheme the priesthood, women, and the patriciate are well provided for. The workingmen, on the other hand, bear a close resemblance to the serfs of the Middle Ages, since, like them, they must labor without hope of social modification. They will have no hand in the government, and their chief reward will be the contentment derived from duties well

COMTE TO EDGER

In his reply (3 Archimedes 68; March 27, 1856), Comte, aged fifty-eight, gave Edger, aged thirty-six, advice, which, if followed, he said, would soon restore his sexual equilibrium and make him well again, both physically and mentally. Comte's regimen follows:

Be strictly chaste during the rest of your life; your wife will help you to make this sacrifice. Give up the use of wine, liqueurs, tea, and tobacco — in short, of all stimulants. Drink only water. Eat sparingly, but let your food be substantial: vegetables, and especially beef and mutton. For dinner I eat three and one-half ounces of meat and a few vegetables; at lunch, milk soup. Inasmuch as you are young and active, I shall allow you fifty per cent more food than I take. This régime must never be separated from the intellectual and moral improvement you are seeking in your private and civic life. To satisfy your desire for affection, you have your wife and children. You have convictions, talent, and energy, which will lead you to play a great part in the regeneration of Humanity. Your interest in our Supreme Being will soon purge you of your sexual instincts. Fill the lacunæ of your education by scientific and mathematical studies, which will help to turn your thoughts into a purer channel. The regimen I have suggested above, together with esthetic cultivation, will soon give you the serenity necessary for your mission. You must not forget that I still regard you as the founder of our American Church.

Comte continues:

Your idea of establishing an agricultural domain exploited by true positivists deserves attention and encouragement. I trust that you may be able to find a rich patron for this enterprise, which would convert Modern Times into a metropolis of American positivism, civic as well as religious.

It will be much better for John Metcalf to marry a Catholic than a Protestant, a deist, or a skeptic, but he should test his future wife by asking her to accept the positive rules of eternal widowhood and of the chaste preamble.¹ If she is unwilling to accept these two con-

¹ Comte required that, thirty days before the civil marriage ceremony, the contracting parties promise the positivist priest to observe strict chastity during the three months succeeding the civil, and preceding the religious, union. In a

Edger adds that he has been following the intellectual program outlined by Comte. Indeed, for more than a year he has been studying Clairaut's *Éléments d'algèbre* and *Éléments de géométrie*, and he believes that he is now able to proceed to Lacroix's *Trigonométrie* and Comte's *Traité élémentaire de géométrie analytique*. He is also pursuing historical readings, which he feels will aid him greatly in his propaganda.

After imparting this information, Edger takes up a matter which is dear to him, the education of his children, and especially of his son.

My oldest child [he says] is a son, now aged twelve, and I find it necessary to appeal to Your Reverence for guidance as to his education. My other children are girls, aged, respectively, eight, four, and one; and, although I am by no means satisfied with the result of my efforts to institute in their regard the normal regimen, the case of my son awakens more anxiety as being more pressing and virtually including the others.¹

My principal concern arises from the fact of his affective culture having been so unhappily defective. I cannot perhaps adequately explain this unfortunate condition without speaking of myself first. For the course of my son's life has necessarily been a product of my own organization and development.

My temperament is what would be called, I believe, *atrabilaire*, or hypochondriac. . . . An extreme irritability of temper, become almost ungovernable under the influence of metaphysical sophisms which increased all my constitutional ills, naturally produced deplorable results in my poor child.

His temperament differs greatly from mine. He is small in stature for his age, but full-chested and somewhat muscular. Yet a slowness of movement and disposition to inactivity seem united with intelligence and observation on the one hand and irascibility on the other.

But it is the absence of obedience and respect towards his parents, so well-grounded as I cannot but recognize it to be from the fearful

¹ In his "Journal," Edger gives the following information concerning his children: Henry Alexander, born at Wellingboro, Northamptonshire, England, August 24, 1844; Lelia Mary, born in England, August 12, 1848; Kate Consuelo, born at Williamsburg, New York, January 10, 1852; Sophia Clotilda, born at Modern Times, March 27, 1855.

continues, "I had intended proposing to my [Mexican] confrere Pedro Contreras if I had been happy enough to hear from him. But the irregularities of our anarchical post-office, added to the frightful disorder permanently subsisting between the United States and Mexico, always openly or covertly at war, through the brutal brigandage of the Yankee commercial spirit, take away almost all hope of the institution of this correspondence." ¹

COMTE TO EDGER

10 Charlemagne 68 (June 26, 1856).

It is only natural that you should be uneasy about your son. Your present example, freed as it is from previous anarchical impressions, will have a good influence on him. Keep him with you in your work; have him study poetry, music, and drawing before he takes up theoretical studies. Do not be too strict with him. His improvement depends on the heart; he must be taught veneration by kindness and tenderness.

I approve your plan to enlarge your nursery business. I am certain that your new projects will not turn you from your apostolic mission.

Your efforts in behalf of positivism have touched me so deeply that I wish to reward you. I have designated you as one of the three members whom I have so far chosen of the seven who will eventually comprise the British contingent of the Positive Committee which I decided as early as 1842 should assist the High Priest of Humanity in the general direction of the Occidental transition.² Your two colleagues are John Fisher and Richard Congreve.

Positivists of the present generation should devote themselves solely to a spiritual reorganization, till governments, especially the French government, transmit the temporal power to our statesmen, the only ones who can check communism. Until we gain power, we must not only avoid political agitation, but turn everybody else from it, and strive always to strengthen authority, in whatever hands it may

¹ In this letter, Edger speaks of Calvin Blanchard as "one of those few [publishers] who make of their business a sort of apostolate of progressive ideas."

² Comte's Occidental Positive Committee, or Permanent Council of the New Church, was to be composed of 8 Frenchmen, 7 Englishmen, 6 Germans, 5 Italians, and 4 Spaniards.

tract.¹ I shall still remain in debt to the printers over \$100, for I found no other way to institute our American branch of the Typographical Fund² than to take upon my own shoulders all the cost of the first publications.

On the other hand, my building expenses have also necessarily outrun my immediate resources. But my family in England have generously undertaken to furnish the means of meeting this outlay, so that it will occasion me no permanent difficulty, but only leaves me temporarily quite without money. . . .

I believe I can perceive a very great influence to have flowed from my little publication of last autumn. When first I stated orally that the only possible solution of the social question was a *religious one*, the idea was universally scouted, mostly with contempt. But very soon after the publication of my *Modern Times* tract, a change came over the spirit of the people, especially observable in the growing loss of their faith in the chimeras of Equitable Commerce.

Of course, pride, developed in this country to the most insane proportions, would hinder any of my neighbors from owning or even perceiving the source of the influence exerted upon them. To recognize in me, the inmate of a poor little log cabin, a superior would have been wormwood and gall. But I could easily distinguish the change being wrought. . . .

In the midst of this growing transformation of our Equity Village, the principal step I have taken has been in connection with that provision of more adequate dwelling accommodations for my family to which I have above alluded. That identification of our private life with our public life which constitutes the principal privilege of positivists led me to think it would not be improper to give a special development to our oratory, so as to indicate externally the special religious mission indissolubly connected with my proletary existence. Consequently our oratory is formed of the base of a tower some three metres square terminating our new house at the end which is turned obviously out of the parallel of our street so as to point towards Paris. This tower, rising just a little above our principal roof, is surmounted by a belfry, and that again by a small spire; so that all that portion of our dwelling presents the aspect of a pretty little country church — universally recognized as the greatest ornament our settlement has yet received.

In view, moreover, of the semi-public nature of our domestic wor-

¹ For this work, see p. 164, above.

² See p. 169, n. 1, above.

With an ever-growing devotedness and submission, I take the honor to subscribe myself

The grateful and attached disciple of Your Reverence

HENRY EDGER.

COMTE TO EDGER

17 Frederick 68 (November 20, 1856).

Your recent opusculé, *The Positivist Calendar*, is eminently satisfactory; in fact, it is the most profound work on positivism that has ever been published.¹

I am pleased to learn that you are gaining ascendancy in your fluctuating, dissentious community. By defending your neighbors

¹The complete title of Edger's work is as follows: *The Positivist Calendar: or, Transitional System of Public Commemoration Instituted by Augustus Comte, Founder of the Positive Religion of Humanity, with a Brief Exposition of Religious Positivism; and an Appendix Containing I. A Concordance of the Calendars; II. The Positivist Library; and III. Narrative of the Rise and Progress of Positivism. Diis extinctis, Deoque, successit Humanitas* (Modern Times, 1856, pp. x, 104). The volume is dedicated to Horace Binney Wallace (for the dedication, see *A. C. and the U. S. (1816-1853)*, p. 53, n. 1).

Edger's preface, which is dated June 17, 1856, is interesting. In it, he declares that the positive philosophy is the greatest work of the age, but that it is merely the intellectual basis on which "to found a vast social movement, having for its end the definitive termination of that condition of revolutionary anarchy, and of general discord, political, industrial, and even domestic, in which we are so deplorably plunged." Concerning his reasons for wishing to explain positivism to Americans, he says: "Gratitude on the one hand for incalculable benefits received, and the duty which devolves upon us all of diffusing the happiness we, ourselves, enjoy, compel the writer, poor, obscure, and devoid of social influence . . . to lay aside for a moment his habitual employment in rural industry, and occupy . . . a public position from which he involuntarily shrinks. . . . He cannot help believing . . . that there certainly must be, among the vast numbers alienated more or less from the conventional faiths, or at least skeptical as to their capacity, we will not say to remedy our actual ills, but even to prevent their indefinite increase, some few souls who will perceive . . . the grandeur and glory of the doctrines expounded, and particularly of the one central conception of the possibility of having the spiritual culture of man, social and individual, henceforth, upon solid and durable, because scientific, bases."

Especially useful in Edger's little volume is the concordance of the two calendars, with the help of which one can convert the days of the positivist calendar into the corresponding days of the Gregorian calendar.

The Positivist Calendar, intended as it was for propaganda, contains practically nothing new. It is merely a condensation of Comte's ideas on philosophy and religion, and a brief history of positivism.

In his correspondence with various disciples, Comte had only words of praise for Edger's book.

tual. In this phase he receives everything from his parents and his family, and gives nothing in return. By this dependence he is trained to become submissive. The family being founded on affection, he learns from it love. In this school of the heart he gradually passes from his instinctive selfishness to altruism, and as morality springs from the feelings, it is in the family that the foundation of personal morals is laid.

The mother, a member of the affective sex, and so best fitted to develop the affections of the child, presides over his early education. The father serves merely as an example by the faithful performance of his duties to his family and to society.

On the religious side, the child adores his mother, the only providence he can recognize. As he learns to talk, a higher providence may be indicated, of which the mother will become the personification. When the proper time comes, the name of Humanity is revealed, and the child is told that all the blessings which the family enjoys, and the rules by which its life is governed, are of social origin, or, in other words, are the gifts and ordinances of the Great Being, and call for gratitude and impose obligations. These sentiments are taught by the mother even before the child begins to take part in domestic worship.

During the later, or second, childhood (from the age of seven to fourteen) the subordination of the child to his mother and his family remains complete. In this stage the training of the moral character continues, but the mind is also developed. The child is introduced to the best poetry, in the study of which an interesting text, a good dictionary, and much oral practice will accomplish more than pedantry and the metaphysical rules of grammar. The child's esthetic training will be continued by acquainting him with drawing, and especially with music, which should be made, as far as possible, a family enjoyment. All these accomplishments will help to develop sentiment, and especially social sentiment.

In this second septennial period the child will begin the prac-

struction my dear wife is well able to give in drawing. For the present, however, my instruction is limited to the two other orders of esthetic exercises.

The first peculiarity of my method was in abstaining from the use of any of the actual systems, either of singing or grammar. Thus I interpreted the positive theories of art, language, and education. I taught my children to sing by singing with them; to read, even in foreign languages, by reading with them and to them.

My passionate love for music long ago led me to teach my children to sing with me, not only some simple rounds, but even the old canon *Non nobis, Domine*. They had also tried sometimes to sing together, with my help, the duet in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.¹ But I had now to teach them also to read music; and I did this in the same general mode — by imitation and exercise.

First, they had always had a copy of the rounds we used to sing together. But now, in order to present the various technicalities in an order of progressive difficulty, I wrote them some *solfeggi armonizzati*, with a part each, proportioning its difficulties to the attainments of each, and adding a bass for my excellent friend John Metcalf, who usually joined our exercises. From time to time I gave them explanations of the various technicalities, but always rigidly adhering to the principle: never to give explanations in a theoretical form, but only to elucidate what had already been learned in practice.

Among our exercises was a practice, commenced soon after Mr. Metcalf came to live in our family, of singing together every evening the canon above mentioned. But I soon felt the need of something in the place of this, that should harmonize with our Faith, and become a spontaneous initiation of a collective worship. At last I ventured to set to music, in four parts, our glorious hymn from Dante, the nine lines beginning: "*Donna sei tanto grande e tanto vali.*"²

In regard to poetic readings, my first difficulty was that there did not seem to be a sufficient variety in our sacred list of books within the comprehension of children. From my first conversion to positivism our Positivist Library has seemed to me an institution of prime importance, and I have religiously restricted my readings to it, with but very rare exceptions. Still, finding no children's books in it, except, indeed, *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Vicar of Wakefield*,

¹ The opera by Mozart (1786).

² The nine verses are from Saint Bernard's prayer to the Virgin Mary in canto XXXIII of Dante's *Paradiso*: "Lady, so great thou art and such thy worth, etc." Of course, in positivism these verses are addressed to Clotilde de Vaux.

I returned to the beginning, reading only the French, with still the same success, the shouts of delighted laughter proving at once their comprehension of the scenes and their interest in them.

After these repeated readings with them, however, I encouraged them to study the original themselves, even permitting the use of a dictionary. . . .

I have to inquire whether our children may not be permitted to share in our domestic worship, even the abstract; not only as distant spectators, but to join at least in chanting our hymns.

I must confess that in encouraging my dear friend John Metcalf to fulfill his project of an excursion to Paris, I have ventured to cherish a hope that it might pave the way for the extension to our children of the normal benefits of the incomparable *tour de France* of your proletaries.¹ Or, at least, that it might facilitate their being enabled to complete their religious initiation while still pursuing their industrial career in the Sacred City.

It is my duty, finally, to confess that the regimen of complete chastity has been beyond my force of resolution.

The devout and grateful disciple of Your Reverence

HENRY EDGER.

COMTE TO EDGER

9 Homer 69 (February 6, 1857).

I have called John William Wallace's attention to your *The Positivist Calendar*, and have suggested that he learn about religious and social positivism from it. He seems more and more inclined to embrace our religion.²

I read your letter dealing with the musical and poetic education of your children to the Société Positiviste on the day before yesterday.

I praise your *The Positivist Calendar* in my eighth annual circular.³

Do not be discouraged because your resolution of chastity has failed. Persevere and you will become wholly chaste.

¹ A custom of France and Germany, by which an artisan, to satisfy his desire for adventure and complete his professional instruction, goes from town to town working at his trade. In her *Le Compagnon du tour de France* (1841), George Sand calls the *tour* an "ambulant apprenticeship."

² There is no evidence that John William Wallace, brother of Horace Binney Wallace, ever thought of becoming a positivist. Concerning him, see *A. C. and the U. S.* (1816-1853), pp. 53-60.

³ For this circular, see Jean Robinet, *Notice sur l'œuvre et sur la vie d'Auguste Comte* (Paris, 1860), p. 521.

the positive morality as is possible in their condition, and at the same time to consolidate and develop their attachment and obedience to their own Church, to which they are still aware that we do not belong. I quite hope ere long to enter into relations with the Catholic priest of this district, who has an extent of duty to perform that would astonish a European. . . .

To confess the whole truth, it is the small sympathy I can find among the members of our own school . . . that is my principal discouragement. What is all our philosophy, all our sociology, all our doctrine from beginning to end in the absence of an actually constituted church and priesthood? If positivism had to triumph by the discussion of its theories, it would never triumph at all. Even let its principles be theoretically acceded to, still but little is gained; while one single positive presbytery fully constituted in the city of Paris would be decisive — the most vast event ever yet transpired upon the face of the globe.¹ Oh true, most true is it that the social advent of our Faith is delayed principally by the want of a right spirit among ourselves. . . .

The recent circular of Your Reverence certainly affords matter for much encouragement. The last year has witnessed a decisive progress. The accession of Mr. Congreve is, I believe, no new gain to positivism, although I have known nothing of him till now.² But his tract referred to by Your Reverence, and which he sent me by mail in return for my Calendar tract, is the most admirable tribute yet paid to positivism. I hope to find in this disciple not only a confrere, but an elder brother, a superior religiously as well as intellectually. How much do I wish that he were an aspirant for our priesthood! . . .

My last tract³ meets with no sale at all, or scarcely any. Among the readers of the *Positive Philosophy* I had hoped to find purchasers enough to pay some part of the expense of printing. As it is, my outlay on this work does already shackle my material relations, and may even seriously compromise them. . . .

The grateful and devoted disciple of Your Reverence

HENRY EDGER.

¹ At the time of Comte's death, the Religion of Humanity had no organized existence whatever.

² Concerning Richard Congreve, the leader of the English positivist movement, see p. 15, above. The tract mentioned in the next sentence is *Gibraltar — The Foreign Policy of England* (London, 1857), in which Congreve, acting on Comte's suggestion, summons England to restore Gibraltar to Spain.

³ *The Positivist Calendar*.

Your appreciation of true positivism is excellent. You recognize that all positivists must be submissive to the High Priest of Humanity, the only source of regenerating bonds.

EDGER TO COMTE

As the reader will see from the following letter, Edger has now reached the point where he thinks that Comte, like every other worthy founder of a religion, should be the object of the worship of his followers. Besides this matter, we find these topics treated in Edger's communication: details concerning his domestic worship; his arrangement of the *Imitation of Christ* for daily reading; Alfred Sabatier's embassy to Rome; information on the prospect of converting the Irish laborers of Modern Times to positivism; Edger's adoption of the positive calendar in his business and in his private affairs; his fear to become a priest; and the likelihood that he has found in New York City a second convert to positivism.

Modern Times, Long Island,
11 Cæsar 69 [May 3, 1857.]

The exceeding condescension and paternal tenderness of the pontifical missive just received most profoundly move me. I have, almost from its first announcement, looked forward to the work promised for our year 76 [1864] as destined to furnish us with our day of Pentecost. Every religion seems to need a founder susceptible of a veritable worship; none has been more admirably provided in this respect than ours. . . .

I trust Your Reverence will pardon my presumption in enclosing herein a copy of the little sacred office by which I have at last initiated a complete domestic worship in the bosom of my beloved family. I would even like to communicate the musical notes by the aid of which we perform that little service. The principal part of it I intone after the manner of the Italian recitative; the responses, except when we use simply our sacred formula¹ for this purpose, are sung in a simple harmonized cadence. Our sacred hymn,² by which the service is closed, I have set to music in four parts adapted to our several voices — *i.e.*, my dear wife's, Lelia's, Henry's, and my own.

¹ This formula may be found on p. 84, n. 2, above.

² See p. 184, n. 2, above.

I can well believe that among these Catholic neighbors we shall in time make even converts. Curiosity leads them, as well as a latent sympathy perhaps, to desire to see our oratory, and even witness our worship. My dear wife has promised to show them our oratory, but we wait till we can procure the statuette of the Virgin and child destined to decorate our simple altar.

I ought to mention that our domestic worship has been established as yet simply as a weekly celebration. It takes place on our positivist Sunday. Indeed, I have been able here to institute in my own personal existence, in my family, even in my practical vocation, the new calendar more completely than has yet been attempted at our sacred center.

I respect the ancient Sunday much more than most of my neighbors; and yet devote the whole morning of our positivist Sunday to religious culture. Our little service, it is true, occupies only about half an hour; but our whole family are specially dressed in their best attire for the occasion. I do all I can think of to impose upon the imagination. I have taken the opportunity afforded by the spare hour which follows our little celebration to deliver an historical lecture *en famille*, seeking to make the concrete facts intelligible to Henry and Lelia, so as already to reveal Humanity to them. I have commenced with the French Revolution, intending to ascend gradually the stream of time under the guidance of the historical section of our Positivist Library. . . .

I have been cherishing the hope of being permitted to give to my children a normal initiation.¹ In one more year from 13th Gutenberg next (August 24) my son will be fourteen years old. I feel it my duty now to demand of Your Reverence more precise instructions as to the nature and extent of the theoretical education I ought to prepare myself to render to him.

The invitation extended to me by Your Reverence to seek even to reach our priesthood profoundly affects me. Ever since my complete adhesion to positivism, I have more and more appreciated the blessedness of undergoing spiritual government. To be subject to a priesthood has been my greatest happiness. I have learned to shun all authority, to prize and cherish subordination before all things. . . .

I have felt, moreover, that it was in setting the example of normal

¹ The second positivist sacrament, initiation, marks the first entrance of the youth into public life, when, at the age of fourteen, he passes from the unsystematic training of mother and family to the systematic education given by the priesthood.

spite of your simple tastes. My usual practice will be, however, to choose our priests from among exceptional proletarians.

EDGER TO COMTE

At last Edger surrenders completely to Comte's wishes. "I devote myself henceforth," he says (5 Charlemagne 69; June 22, 1857), "before all other things to the preparation for our holy priesthood." But he feels that he must once more remind the High Priest of Humanity of his one moral defect:

I have completely failed thus far in the institution of even an approximate chastity. . . . Every night I have to do battle with lust, and pass sleepless hours in a very dubious cerebral state. . . . Quite lately most alarming symptoms have appeared. The involuntary cerebral excitation has not been confined to nocturnal hours; even during the day it has come on in a frightful manner, revealing with an appalling distinctness the gradual approach of that horrible form of insanity which has been termed nymphomania.¹

After this somber confession, Edger turns to more pleasant matters. He is studying trigonometry and analytical geometry, in order to prepare himself to direct the theoretical initiation of his son. And then he gives Comte details concerning his conversion to positivism of an Englishman, Richard Parker, of Brooklyn, New York, an event which is not only a remarkable achievement in itself, but one which will finally, after long months of waiting, provide Sophia Clotilda with a godmother. Indeed, Mrs. Parker, although not yet a positivist,² has con-

¹ In 1885, when sixty-five years of age, Edger expressed the wish that "intelligent Christians might come to appreciate the unspeakable blessedness, and profoundly noble reactions, of the habit of permanent and systematic chastity in the conjugal relation (or what is the same thing, to understand the inevitably and profoundly degrading tendency of all sexual indulgence for its own sake)" (*Auguste Comte and the Middle Ages* [Pressburg, Hungary, 1885], p. 106).

Comte's insistence on the importance of chastity for mental, moral, and physical improvement shows how closely his life was connected with his religious doctrine. Because of Clotilde de Vaux's resistance to his advances, he remained chaste during the two years of their relations. After her death he continued to be chaste as a tribute to her memory. Then, in the Religion of Humanity, he strove to force chastity on his followers.

² In a subsequent letter, Edger speaks of Mrs. Parker as a convert to positivism.

Comte was ill. Forthwith, five days before Comte's death, there arose from the village of Modern Times the following cry of despair, which, alas, reached the Sacred City after His Supreme Eminence had breathed his last:

Modern Times, Long Island,
19th Gutenberg 69 [August 31, 1857.]

Father most dearly beloved, Master adored:

My heart is overwhelmed with anguish; they tell me Thou art sick! Oh! can it really be that the life on which alone the happiness and progress of Humanity for many generations to come entirely depend has been in actual jeopardy? Oh! that I might at this moment die, could I but add unto Thine, O Father, the remaining span of my poor life!

My soul is rent with anguish and doubt. I feel as though I must fly to Thy side. Love, gratitude, anxiety, filial respect, and tenderness draw me at this moment towards Paris. My beloved wife offers me her few jewels—her little material all—to supply the means for such a journey. But the calm, stern voice of the sublime morality Thou hast taught us says: "Who bade thee go? Stand to thy post, do thine own duty, leave others worthier than thyself to do theirs. What shouldst thou do, poor worm, if thou wert there? Have patience and unconditional resignation; know thou that, come what may, the destinies of Humanity shall be fulfilled. . . ."

Alas! alas! how fatal is that necessity which forced our Religion to spring up in the ranks of revolutionary souls incapable of a real regeneration! What tremendous grief has it not imposed upon Thy noble, Thy Godlike soul! How sublime is Thy life, O beloved and adored Lord and Master, in comparison with that of the Christian hero—the *faux fondateur* of Galilee! For Thy life is one long crucifixion endured at the hands of Thy pretended—nay, of Thy sincere—followers, whose insufficient appreciation robs Thee of all profound coöperation and threatens at each moment to blast Thy sublimest effort. . . .

Terrible is this hour. To us, far away from Thee, unable to communicate with Thee, receiving tidings only at long intervals, filled up by fearful, by agonizing suspense, this hour is indeed terrible. . . .

We would fain cherish hope. The letter just received from our beloved Brother Lonchampt speaks in encouraging tones. But at the remembrance of Thine agonies, at the thought of the cruel wounds

here, our nascent American Church, calls upon Thee, O Heavenly Father, with one voice, to remain on earth, yet to guide us. . . .¹

Thine unworthy, weeping disciple
HENRY EDGER.

To the Sovereign Pontiff of Humanity.

After his recovery from the prostration caused by the death of Auguste Comte, Edger resumed his propaganda at *Modern Times*. From his "Journal" we learn that on the 24th of Gutenberg 71 (September 5, 1859) he celebrated the second anniversary of the transformation² of his Master in the presence of "seven members of our Church, including three children and some strangers," and that on the 19th of Moses 72 (January 19, 1860) he held services in honor of Comte's birthday.³ In the "Journal" we also discover that Edger continued to correspond with British and French coreligionists, especially

there could be a religion of higher, holier, and more unselfish aims than that of Christianity. Believe, then, most reverend Father, your books have taught your disciples a true and noble conjugal theory. . . ." (Mrs. Edger's letter is in the archives of the Société Positiviste, in Paris).

¹ Comte's health began to decline early in 1857. In May of that year he went on foot to the funeral of his old friend Vicillard at Père-Lachaise Cemetery, and returned home exhausted. A quarrel with another friend, Célestin de Blignières, aggravated his condition. About the middle of July he showed improvement, but on July 26 he vomited blood. The fact that he refused all medicines may or may not have injured his chances of recovery. Finally, after another improvement in the middle of August, he died of cancer of the stomach on September 5, surrounded by his faithful disciples Joseph Lonchampt, Sophie Bliot and her husband, Martin Thomas, and Dr. Jean Robinet. Some of Comte's contemporaries were of the opinion that had he not been weakened by too severe dieting and by excessive cerebral activity, he might have lived long enough to carry out some of the many plans he had made for the late fifties and the early sixties.

² That is, death, the transition between the two lives, objective and subjective.

³ The "Journal" contains the following list of positivists at *Modern Times* in 1859: Henry Edger, wife, and three children, John Metcalf and wife, Caroline Plunkett, and Ellen L. Allen. To this list we may add Richard Parker and wife. So, then, the total number of converts made by Edger in five years was ten, of whom four were members of his own family. Cf. Wilfrid Ward, *The Clothes of Religion: A Reply to Popular Positivism* (London and New York, 1886): "A positivist meeting, in view of the small number of adherents the sect has attracted, has been wittily described as 'three persons and no God. . . .'"

That Pierre Laffitte was as appreciative of Edger's activities as Comte had been is shown by the following extract from the twelfth positivist circular (28 Moses 72; January 28, 1860):

Notre digne apôtre américain, M. Edger, continue son active propagande, et je dois rapidement signaler les pas accomplis pendant l'année 1859, sous son intervention dévouée. Le 24 Gutenberg 71 (5 septembre 1859), il a fait la célébration commémorative de la mort d'Auguste Comte. "J'ai donc en fait, dit-il justement, inauguré le culte public de l'Humanité sur le sol américain."

Mais outre cette installation du culte public, M. Edger, développant noblement son office sacerdotal, a administré, le 26 Gutenberg 71, le sacrement de la présentation, et le 28 Gutenberg 71, celui du mariage à un digne prolétaire qui a su montrer, par une prolongation exceptionnelle du chaste préambule, la puissance modificatrice de la Religion de l'Humanité sur les natures vraiment énergiques et réellement élevées.

La Religion de l'Humanité s'installe donc en fait par l'épreuve la plus décisive, celle qui consiste à modifier la vie privée. C'est par cette moralisation personnelle que la Religion positive montrera enfin sa puissante aptitude à la direction effective des natures énergiques sur lesquelles le théologisme n'exerce plus depuis longtemps aucune action quelconque.

M. Edger a consacré, le 2 Shakespeare 71 [September 11], une séance publique à l'exposition de quelques-unes des solutions principales du positivisme pour la régénération industrielle. Ce dévouement continu, et cette énergique persistance de notre apôtre américain, et les résultats incontestables d'une telle action, consolident nos espérances sur une mission qui doit être dignement appuyée.¹

After 1860 information concerning Henry Edger becomes scarce. On November 18, 1861, he was naturalized a citizen of the United States,² and in 1864 he published his *Modern Times Tract*, No. 3,³ entitled *The Positive Community: Glimpse of the*

after committing several crimes). By means of these strict ordinances, Comte hoped to elevate the conception of marriage, and especially to enhance the dignity of women.

¹ Jean Robinet, *Notice sur l'œuvre et sur la vie d'Auguste Comte* (Paris, 1860), pp. 590, 591.

² H. Edger, *Auguste Comte and the Middle Ages*, p. 115.

³ His first two *Modern Times Tracts* were, it will be remembered, *Modern Times*, *the Labor Question*, and *the Family and The Positivist Calendar*.

ism¹ as by a desire to end his days near the Holy City, decided to leave America. He went first to Paris, and then took up his abode in the boulevard de Lesseps, Versailles, where in his humble dwelling he delivered lectures and celebrated regularly the principal positivist festivals.²

In the eighties he went to Pressburg, Hungary, where he remained some four years, lecturing and preparing works for publication.³

Finally, in April, 1888, at his domicile in Versailles, occurred the death of Henry Edger, aged sixty-eight, former solicitor and attorney of London, Protestant, socialist, communist, and for some twenty-six years a resident of *Modern Times*, and certainly one of the most faithful disciples that the founder of the Religion of Humanity ever had. Buried on the twenty-first of April in the cemetery of Montreuil, he was honored in the *Revue Occidentale* with a brief note from the pen of Charles Jeannelle, who rightly said: "Il avait fait de

last date in the "Journal of Henry Edger at *Modern Times*" is November 21, 1869; (b) Paul Edger was born in the United States on June 16, 1875 (*Revue Occidentale*, March 1, 1904, p. 191); (c) Henry Edger published in the *Radical Review* (New Bedford, Massachusetts), November, 1877, pp. 397-418, an article entitled "Prostitution and the International Woman's League" (reprinted in pamphlet form, New Bedford, Mass., 1878); (d) A statement in the *Revue Occidentale*, July, 1880, p. 157: "Un de nos confrères, fixé depuis peu à Paris, M. Henry Edger, de New York. . ."

¹ In his *Auguste Comte and the Middle Ages*, p. 101, note, Edger gives what may be intended as a reason for his lack of success in America. "The so-called Reformation [he says] brought about . . . a certain recrudescence of theologism, ultimating nowadays in some curious phenomena, especially in the development of a fetishistic worship of the Bible, which, as so much paper, printed in a certain fashion, and in a peculiar style of calf-binding, constitutes, especially in the United States of America, a sort of idol. . ."

² *Revue Occidentale*, July 1, 1913, pp. 231-233.

³ In 1884 he lectured in Pressburg on "Auguste Comte and the Philosophy of History," and in 1885 he published his *Auguste Comte and the Middle Ages: A Lecture given before a private circle in the city of Pozsony (Presbourg) on Saturday, 24 Gutenberg 97 (5 September, 1885) by Henry Edger, naturalized citizen (English-born) of the United States of America*. In the advertisements at the back of this pamphlet the following works by Edger are announced as "in preparation": *Indications simples et sommaires quant à la Religion positive de l'Humanité* and *La Prière positive et les autres pratiques purement personnelles de la Religion positive de l'Humanité*.

leasure to searching for the most noble feminine types of Humanity in the works recommended in the *Catéchisme* of Your Reverance.¹ I also attended the Catholic Church; the Virgin Mother became an object of daily adoration. But our most adorable Saint Clotilde, as soon as I had access to the memorials,² excited my most profound veneration and gratitude. This combined with the intimate worship of my mother, who died about seven years since, in whom I am so happily privileged and indebted for heart and mind and character. The amelioration and moral liberty I obtained has shown me how much such a Faith is capable of accomplishing even when I was surrounded by the most unfavourable circumstances. The only Faith which could fully satisfy the wants of my heart.

In my efforts at propagande amongst the Protestants, I could not induce much interest in regard to the religious aspect of positivism; it was purely intellectual, and their natures so adverse to all discipline.

I am now getting personally acquainted with the Catholics, what I have long desired. The affective influence I receive since my acquaintance, and the beneficial influence and reflection induced when I attend their sanctuary, makes me feel the comparatively sacred ground to that I have been treading. Yet I am much saddened at the incomplete protection of their priesthood, and the indifference of especially the children of emigrants from Europe. My respect and regular attendance at their church reacts somewhat and induced those I have been acquainted with to become more regular in their attendance, while I endeavour to make my position known as much as possible to them. I find it is amongst those lately converted to Catholicism that are the best Catholics.

I have encroched on Your Reverance to solicit some indications in regard to my course among the Catholics. As yet in my conversations I have only spoken of those points that positivism retains from Catholicism, while I seek to introduce modifications and concrete applications of the philosophy.

Your most respectfull and devoted servant,

JOHN METCALF.

To the High Priest and
Sovereign Pontiff of Humanity,
Auguste Comte.

¹ That is, the women mentioned in certain books of the Positivist Library.

² For Comte's memorials to Clotilde de Vaux in the *Système de politique positive*, see p. 168, n. 1, above.

reading of the *Imitation of Christ*, the *Divina Commedia*, and the *Système de politique positive*; his cordial relations with Henry Edger and his family; his bitterness against Protestantism, and his intention to marry a Catholic; his eagerness to resume his mathematical studies; his plan to visit Paris, the Sacred City, "to improve my mathematical talent and esthetic taste, so as to better characterize my labours on my return to Modern Times"; his efforts to master the French language; his correspondence with the English positivist John Fisher and with the French carpenter-positivist Fabien Magnin; his delight because he has been chosen by Comte as the representative type of the positive proletariat, and because Henry Edger has finally decided to become a priest; his two visits to Edger's new converts, Richard Parker and wife; his attempts to write positivist poetry; and his many compliments to Clotilde de Vaux.

In his pontifical replies (August 18, 1856; February 6 and July 20, 1857), Comte gives Metcalf all manner of kindly advice concerning his religious and civic life. He expresses the opinion that Metcalf and Edger are the best types of the Occidental regeneration, since in Paris he cannot find complete types, either theoretical or practical, because his followers there have all passed through too long a phase of skepticism.

Inasmuch as Metcalf is to serve as the instrument in the conversion to positivism of the mass of American and English proletarians, Comte is especially careful in his instructions concerning the attitude he should observe and the duties he should perform. First of all, he must venerate his industrial chiefs, and do his daily work to the best of his ability. Then he must combat two fatal tendencies which are gradually corrupting Occidental proletarians: namely, a disposition to try to rise above their class, to become bourgeois, an aberration which can result only in discontent and unhappiness; and a penchant to resort to violence in conflicts between labor and capital. In other words, Comte stresses the fact that Metcalf should endeavor to make workingmen understand that the material exist-

CONCLUSION

It is now an established fact that Auguste Comte had little real knowledge of the United States, its history, its inhabitants, and its customs. Even Frederic Harrison, a most loyal positivist, wrote: "His knowledge of America was extremely slight, and was limited to some rather rapid generalizations from current judgments." And especially is it true that Comte, whose imagination often led him to see things on a vast scale, magnified beyond all reason the conquests of positivism in the United States. On this point Harrison said: "Comte greatly overrated the numbers and the importance of those Americans who had shown great interest in his philosophy and were prepared to accept him as their leader. His religious synthesis . . . was in embryo, and quite unknown across the Atlantic."¹

In view of this information, it may be worth our while to learn exactly what Comte thought of the introduction of positivism into the United States and of its progress there in the early fifties.

The first intimation he had that his philosophy had reached the New World was when, on April 22, 1851, Horace Binney Wallace, of Philadelphia, who for years had been a reader of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, visited him in his apartment at 10, rue Monsieur-le-Prince. Three weeks later Comte wrote to his friend Célestin de Blignières:

J'ai reçu, le 22 avril, une visite très intéressante d'un éminent citoyen de Philadelphie, qui m'a révélé l'existence, dans cette ville et à New-York, d'un précieux foyer positiviste, surgi depuis quelques années, et aussi consistant, ce me semble, que le noble foyer hollandais, mais dans un milieu beaucoup plus propre à provoquer son active expansion.²

¹ Harrison, "Auguste Comte in America," in the *Positivist Review* (London), June, 1901, p. 122.

² *Lettres inédites à C. de Blignières* (Paris, 1932), p. 29; letter of May 12, 1851.

en retour du juste respect qu'il obtiendra pour leur libre emploi d'une richesse socialement possédée.¹

On February 19, 1852, he told Dr. Audiffrent of the "énorme accroissement du positivisme aux États-Unis,"² and on May 2 of the same year he said in the preface to the second volume of the *Système de politique positive*:

Nos frères d'Amérique ont dû mieux apprécier le caractère fondamental de l'anarchie occidentale, plus grave là que partout ailleurs, malgré les apparences contraires. On y a donc senti plus tôt l'impossibilité de surmonter les tendances communistes spontanément émanées de toutes nos impulsions sociales, autrement que d'après le libre ascendant du positivisme, seul capable de procurer partout une sage satisfaction aux divers instincts de régénération. Cette unique issue de notre périlleuse transition est déjà conçue dignement par les nobles citoyens, qui de plus en plus invoquent la religion positive au nom de l'ordre profondément menacé. . . .

During the following summer (August 26) he wrote M. de Thoulouze that "le positivisme a maintenant un succès notable aux États-Unis, bien autrement qu'en France et même en Angleterre."³ And still not a single positivist in the United States!

Ten months later (June 23, 1853) he informed Eugène Deulin, a banker of Épernay, that, in addition to the positivist centers in New York and Philadelphia, "il s'en est formé maintenant un au fond de l'État du Maine, le plus septentrional de tous."⁴

For two years Comte's confidence in the spread of his doctrines in the United States remained unshaken. Then, in 1854, in the fourth volume of the *Système de politique positive* (p. xv), he expressed regret that outside of Paris the Religion of Humanity had only two genuine nuclei, the one,

¹ *Système de pol. pos.*, II, xxi.

² *Lettres à divers*, I, 86.

³ *Corr. inéd.*, III, 117.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 260. After a most searching inquiry, I have been unable to find any information concerning this hotbed of positivism.

Comte's project of founding on Long Island a positive state within the Union, was enough to frighten a humble nurseryman of Modern Times and a timid carpenter of New York City!

Now that we have seen Comte's dream of the propagation of his theories in the United States, let us recapitulate what was actually accomplished there by positivism in the decade extending from 1851, the date of Horace Binney Wallace's first visit to 10, rue Monsieur-le-Prince, to 1861, the beginning of the Civil War.

In a preceding volume I showed that, although a number of Americans took an interest, often profound, in Comte and his system before 1853, not a single one accepted the positive philosophy without reservation, and not a single one accepted the Religion of Humanity at all.¹ And in the present volume we have seen that the first American positivist, Henry Edger, after five years of earnest efforts, succeeded in making only ten converts, four of whom were his wife and three of his children. And of these converts, all of whom we have any definite knowledge — that is, Edger himself, his wife, and three of his children, John Metcalf, and Richard Parker and his wife — were English-born, with the exception of one of Edger's daughters, either Kate Consuelo, a native of Williamsburg, New York, or Sophia Clotilda, born at Modern Times, who were aged, respectively, in 1859, seven and four, and were, therefore, scarcely competent to choose a philosophy and a religion for themselves.²

Before we try to determine why positivism made so little

¹ In my earlier work I considered the cases of William Henry Channing, Theodore Parker, George Ripley, Orestes Augustus Brownson, James Walker, Thomas Hill, Robert Turnbull, Joseph Henry Allen, John Henry Young, Edgar Allan Poe, Seba Smith, William Mitchell Gillespie, James O'Connell, Horace Binney Wallace, John William Wallace, Julia Ward Howe, John M'Clintock, and George Frederick Holmes.

² Edger included among the positivists at Modern Times in 1859 Caroline Plunkett, Ellen L. Allen, and John Metcalf's wife, Clara Christiana Osborne, but he gives no information concerning them.

development as well as for absurd vagaries, and so should have been favorable to certain principles of positivism.

In the third place, there was the question of immigration, which from 143,000 Europeans in the decade 1821-1830 had grown to the enormous figures of 1,700,000 in the decade 1841-1850, and 2,600,000 from 1851 to 1856.

Multiple were the causes which led European hordes to abandon the countries of their birth in order to seek better conditions across the sea. First of all, the severe winters of 1845 and 1846 on the Continent, and the devastating spring floods which followed, played havoc in the farming districts. In the second place, the potato famine in Ireland in 1845 and 1846 sent hundreds of thousands of Hibernians to the land where any one could enter without being asked indiscreet questions. Then, the exile of some of the radical leaders of the revolutions of 1848 and 1849 helped to swell the influx. And finally, the discovery of gold in California in 1849 served as a lure to many adventurers who were none too sure whence their next few meals would come.

Since these newcomers were of various nationalities and creeds, and many were in revolt, it seems that they at least might have given ear to Comte's system, which promised brilliant things to the unfortunate, the downtrodden, and the discontented.

When we add to these apparently favorable conditions the fact that a mild awakening of interest in scientific studies was noticeable in the forties and fifties,—as I have shown elsewhere in the cases of Seba Smith, William Mitchell Gillespie, and Edgar Allan Poe,¹—and that a feeble, a very feeble, current of free-thinking persisted in the United States,—a current

¹ See *A. C. and the U. S. (1816-1853)*, pp. 27, 38.—For the views of the orthodox Christian scientist of the period, who believed that "all scientific truth is adapted to prove the existence or to illustrate the perfections of the Deity," see *The Religion of Geology and Its Connected Sciences* (Boston, 1851), by the Reverend Edward Hitchcock, president of Amherst College, and professor of natural theology and geology in the same institution.

hibitions, he will suffer excommunication, in which there are three degrees, as follows: domestic remonstrance in the presence of friends and relatives; public censure; and temporary or permanent ostracism from society.

From the few interdicts which I have mentioned, is it not evident that positivism could never appeal to the masses? Because unusual circumstances and his love for Clotilde de Vaux impelled Comte to an ascetic life, does it follow that he, an individual, has the right, of his own authority, to impose on future generations the same rigorous régime? The answer is clearly that he has no such right, and the fact that positivism has made *relatively few converts* is the best proof that men are unwilling to accept him as their lawmaker and their spiritual guide. The Religion of Humanity, as outlined in the *Catéchisme positiviste* and the *Système de politique positive*, was not intended to be, I know, an imitation of Christ, but it is undoubtedly too stern an imitation of Auguste Comte.

A sixth obstacle—and an insurmountable one—was that positivism was an importation, a foreign institution, and foreign institutions were in extremely bad odor with the nativistic element of the citizenry of the United States.

It is perhaps difficult for an intelligent person of the twentieth century to appreciate the bitterness of the American anti-foreign sentiment four score years ago. A few quotations from contemporary writers will shed light on that point.

In July, 1850, a contributor to the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* wrote thus (p. 11):

These European reformers are flocking hither by thousands, bringing with them the pestilent products of the worn-out soil of the Old World.

The following year the Reverend Robert Baird, an American, in an address delivered in London on the critical state of world affairs, said:

There is another element of disturbance whose influence we must not disregard. There have gone from the Old World to the United

force had to be closely connected with France, had little chance to rally adepts at a time when Americans were rebelling against foreign influences of all kinds.

And finally, there was a seventh obstacle, which was not, however, so important as the others, because positivism never got well enough under way in the United States to become a force in public affairs. Nevertheless, in the only instance when it had occasion to intervene, — that is, in Henry Edger's opposition to the radical doctrines of *Modern Times*, — Comte advised his apostle to avoid a critical, argumentative attitude. Now, it was just this middle stand, this conciliatory attitude towards vital problems which contributed largely to the decline of positivism in England, and it is certain that the continuation of such a policy in the United States would have hindered the spread of positivism there.

Everything considered, it would seem almost that Comte, with malice prepense, had sought to create a system in which there would be elements objectionable to as many classes of American society as possible. Protestants could not accept positivism because it offered them a pale imitation of Catholicism, and because they preferred the tyranny of the Pope of Rome to that of the Pope of Paris. Catholics rejected it because they thought their religion superior to one derived in large part from it. Clergymen and college professors condemned it because it derided traditional theology, metaphysics, and philosophy. Atheists and free-thinkers objected to Comte's incessant preaching of religion, and the votaries of religion were displeased because he preached atheism. Feminists were frightened by his suggestion that women should devote their time to their homes, and anti-feminists frowned when he taught that women should be exalted, and especially should be given a thorough education. Democrats were hostile because positivists were opposed to popular suffrage, and communists were estranged when Comte declared that society is everything and the individual is nothing. Socialists were roiled by the positive doctrine which

ship of human excellence . . . would . . . excite the ridicule of the average American reader; all sense of what is noble in human life has been so educated out of him by the prevailing liberal theology and metaphysical thought which dominate the literature of the day, while the past, with its holy associations, has fallen into such disrepute, that the means used by the complete positivist to idealize and glorify human excellence would seem trivial and absurd.¹

(b) The receptivity to new ideas and the absence of repressive authority—State, Church, Academy, or University—helped to bring about an instability, a mobility, a desire for change and novelty in all American things which made the establishment of permanent positivist groups extremely difficult.

(c) The narrow, pugnacious Protestants with whom Comte had to contend were firm believers in the existence of a personal God, in the immortality of the soul, and in the divine inspiration of the Bible. It goes without saying that positivism was foredoomed to failure when it clashed with such beliefs, since it substituted Humanity for God, an unconscious life beyond the grave for a conscious life, and the works of Comte, the *Imitation of Christ*, and the *Divina Commedia* for the Old and the New Testaments.

(d) Immigration, which might have awakened an interest in positivism, in many instances had a contrary effect. Among the newcomers from Europe were large numbers of skeptics, rationalists, atheists, socialists, communists, revolutionaries, and anarchists, who have always been among the most bitter adversaries of Comte's doctrines, which are based on order and religion and on a determined opposition to communism, socialism, and revolution.

(e) So far as I can judge from their writings, not more than five of the scores of Americans who ventured to criticize Comte's scheme went to the trouble to study it carefully before they condemned it. If the leaders of American thought deemed

¹ *A Positivist Primer* (New York, 1871), p. 23. This work was published under the pseudonym "C. G. David."

of American eccentricities. Then, too, Henry Edger, the leader of the American positivist movement, and John Metcalf, his lieutenant, the one a tiller of the soil and the other a joiner, were unknown men, without means or connections, and, what was worse, both were comparatively recent immigrants from England and therefore not even citizens of the United States. That Edger's efforts went almost unheeded, and that the radius of his influence was small, is proved by the fact that his tracts had practically no sale, and that, so far as I have been able to ascertain, he did not make a single convert outside of Modern Times, with the exception of Richard Parker and his wife, who lived only some forty miles away, in another part of Long Island.

Although Comte's statements concerning the dissemination of positivism in the United States were, as I have shown, exaggerated, let us not forget that he was not wholly wrong when he predicted grand results for his system in the New World, since the greatest triumphs of positivism have been won in Brazil, the Argentine, Peru, and Chili, and the flag of the first-named country bears two words of the sacred formula, *Ordem e Progresso*. And especially let us not be too severe on Comte for declaring that the year 1900 would see the beginning of the true positivist era, during which the entire world would bow down before the High Priest of Humanity. An illusion, to be sure, but, as Ernest Renan remarked,

Illusion commune à tous les grands réformateurs. Jésus se figurait le but beaucoup plus proche qu'il n'était; il ne tenait pas compte de la lenteur des mouvements de l'humanité; il s'imaginait réaliser en un jour ce qui, dix-huit cents ans plus tard, ne devait pas encore être achevé.¹

¹ *Vie de Jésus* (17th ed., Paris, 1882), p. 289

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

AUGUST HERMANN EWERBECK

Ewerbeck, who was born at Danzig, Prussia, in 1816, was a graduate of the medical faculties of the Universities of Berlin and Utrecht. In the forties he joined in Paris a group of German *émigrés*, some of whom had fled to France because of their radical activities in the German States, while others had come voluntarily, out of love for liberty and democracy, to serve their apprenticeship in the French revolutionary movement. In Paris, Ewerbeck became a leading member of the secret society known as the League of the Just, and from 1844 to 1851 was on intimate terms with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, although later he seems to have lost their confidence. Eventually he acquired French citizenship and undertook to serve as a link between French and German culture. He was the author of a number of works, among which are the following: *Qu'est-ce que la religion, d'après la nouvelle philosophie allemande?* (Paris, 1850); ¹ *Qu'est-ce que la Bible, d'après la nouvelle philosophie allemande?* (Paris, 1850); *L'Allemagne et les Allemands* (Paris, 1851); and *La Russie et l'équilibre européen* (Paris, 1854). He also made a German translation of Étienne Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie* (Paris, 1847), and a French translation of a work by August Schleicher under the title *Les Langues de l'Europe moderne* (Paris, 1852).

L'Allemagne et les Allemands is of especial interest, since it contains a favorable mention of Auguste Comte,² which was probably the beginning of close relations between Ewerbeck and the philosopher. Their friendship was facilitated by the fact that Adolf von Ribbentrop, a crony of Ewerbeck's, who

¹ A translation of several works by Ludwig Feuerbach.

² P. 613.

venticules des Méthodistes, et je crois même que la fameuse histoire des esprits frappeurs, une invention américaine, a pour origine les efforts nerveux qu'ils font pour chasser l'ennui. J'ai assisté à New York (chez le médium Madame Brown, née Fuchs, fille d'un Allemand américain, de la ville septentrionale Rochester, demeurant à New York n° 78 de la vingt-sixième rue) à une séance pour le prix d'un dollar.¹ J'en fus agité sans m'en laisser convaincre. Leurs académies sont misérables, mais leurs écoles de chimie, de mécanique et d'astronomie sont bonnes, dit-on. Certes, l'Américain, à Boston, qui, comme M. Ribbentrop m'a dit, avait traduit et imprimé votre livre, doit être une exception miraculeuse parmi les Yankees!²

L'instinct prédominant du Yankee me paraît être celui de tyranniser; de là cette triste inclination presque générale pour le maintien de l'esclavage des nègres. "Nous voulons une république comme celle de Rome, nous avons donc besoin d'une classe esclave," disait un Yankee méridional. Les Yankees du Nord, qui sont en minorité du nombre,³ crient contre cette infâme institution, mais plutôt par des motifs industriels et de commerce que par noblesse de sentiment. A présent le Midi est prépondérant partout, et l'esclavage va se propager vers l'ouest et vers le nord, dans le grand pays Nebraska, avec violation de la loi qui avait renfermé l'esclavage dans certaines limites géographiques. On volera Cuba, pays avec esclavage, et les partisans de cette institution dans l'Union n'en seront que d'autant plus

¹ Madame Brown was none other than Leah, the oldest of the Fox sisters, whom I mentioned on p. 105, above. On September 10, 1851, Leah married her second husband, Calvin Brown, who died in May, 1853. Her first and third husbands were named, respectively, Fish and Underhill. In her book, *The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism* (New York, 1885), she says (p. 74) that her parents were native-born Americans, and that her father's ancestors were German, "the name having been originally Voss, which passed through Foss into Fox." Concerning the quarters visited by Ewerbeck, she says (p. 251): "I established myself in West Twenty-sixth Street, in a large and handsome brown-stone front, in a neighborhood then of first-rate excellence, in which I resided for two years." In her book (pp. 261-263) may be found the rules which governed her seances. The admission fee was, as Ewerbeck states, one dollar, and the receipts on some days were as high as one hundred dollars. Of course, Leah warns the public against "fraudulent mediums." For an account of her spiritualistic activities in New York City from 1852 to 1858, "which was the close of my career of public mediumship," see chapters XVIII and XIX.

² Ewerbeck evidently has in mind *The Philosophy of Mathematics* (New York, 1851), a translation of the first volume of Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive* by William Mitchell Gillespie, who was not a resident of Boston, but of Schenectady, New York. Concerning this translation, see *A. C. and the U. S.* (1816-1853), pp. 38-41.

³ Of course, this statement is incorrect.

sort de l'Amérique; ils tâchent de lui imprimer de la *bildung*, mot allemand qui signifie civilisation humanitaire, esthétique, morale, et tout le reste. S'ils y réussissent, l'Amérique sera sauvée; sinon, elle se perdra.¹

Voilà, Monsieur, ce que j'avais à vous rapporter sur le pays où, par malheur, je me trouve depuis huit mois environ. . . .²

A. H. EWERBECK.

¹ Whether the Germans have ever saved the United States I am not competent to say. On the other hand, that they did all in their power to undermine American institutions in the fifties I do not hesitate to assert. The following are a few of the "demands" of the Free German Associations, which had branches throughout the entire country. universal suffrage; election of all officers by the people; abolition of the presidency, and of the senates, both state and national; right of the people to recall their representatives (cashier them) at their pleasure; right of the people to change the Constitution when they like; all lawsuits to be conducted without expense; a department of the government to be set up for the protection of immigration; a reduced term of acquiring citizenship; abolition of all neutrality; intervention in favor of every nation struggling for liberty; abolition of laws for the observance of the Sabbath; abolition of prayers in Congress and of oaths on the Bible; taxation of church property; promotion of education by instruction in the German language and by the establishment of a German university; abolition of capital punishment, and the introduction of the human amelioration system (Samuel C. Bussey, *Immigration: Its Evils and Consequences* [New York, 1856], pp. 14, 15). See also Anna Ella Carroll, *The Great American Battle* (New York and Auburn, 1856), p. 356.

As early as 1851, before he went to the United States, Ewerbeck had visions of German conquest which would have done credit to Kaiser Wilhelm II. In the preface to his *L'Allemagne et les Allemands*, he wrote: "Les deux Amériques, avec toutes leurs îles, grandes et petites, l'Australie, le Japon et la Chine, avec toutes leur îles, grandes et petites, seront, avant la fin de notre siècle, à cette race universelle des Anglo-Saxons, c'est-à-dire des Germains. Ce sera là son deuxième essor; son premier a été la destruction du vieux monde romain et la construction de notre monde, qui décline actuellement."

² Concerning the incompatibility of Americans and Germans, Jean-Jacques Ampère says in his *Promenade en Amérique* (Paris, 1855), I, 241: "Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait sous le soleil deux natures d'hommes plus différentes que l'Yankee et l'Allemand: l'un tout pratique, tout positif, homme d'action, d'énergie, presque toujours avec un but matériel; l'autre tout idéal, homme de spéculation, parfois de rêverie, vivant pour la science et par la pensée. Il n'est pas surprenant que ces deux peuples si différents, bien qu'ils soient l'un et l'autre d'origine germanique, aient beaucoup de peine à s'entendre et à se convenir réciproquement."

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